

CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

ARCHDEACON OF BUCKINGHAM

From the Bishop of Oxford

As a Diocese, we are prayerfully seeking the person whom God is calling to be the next Archdeacon of Buckingham. The role has become vacant following the retirement of the Venerable Guy Elsmore after nine years of dedicated service.

The Buckingham Archdeaconry is one of the largest and most diverse in the Church of England. The new Archdeacon will join the new Bishop of Buckingham and the Associate Archdeacon in leading and enabling the Buckingham Area Team and will also be a key member of the senior team across the Diocese of Oxford at a key time in our common life. We are seeking an Archdeacon of high capacity who will be (and become) highly skilled in the management of people, resources, buildings and systems and whose ministry will complement and enable the ministry of the Area Bishop.

At the heart of our vision the Diocese of Oxford discern a call to become a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world: contemplative, compassionate and courageous. We are seeking a new Archdeacon for Buckingham who will seek to model those qualities and enable and equip the whole Church across the Buckingham Area to live them out in our daily lives.

The Diocese of Oxford

The Diocese of Oxford is a living, growing network of more than a thousand churches, chaplaincies and schools across the three counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. More than 2.5 million people live in the Diocese and this number is set to rise significantly over the next decade.

The Diocese is divided into four Episcopal Areas in a mature area scheme. The Bishop of Buckingham is Area Bishop for Buckinghamshire. The Bishop of Reading is Area Bishop for Berkshire. The Bishop of Dorchester is the Area Bishop for Oxfordshire outside the city of Oxford. The Bishop of Oxford has the city of Oxford as an Episcopal Area and oversees the whole. Christ Church is the Cathedral for the Diocese.

Church House Oxford is the administrative centre for the Diocese and is the base for more than 100 staff working in support of over 600 parishes and benefices and 285 schools (many in multi academy trusts). The Bishops of Oxford and Dorchester and their teams work from Church House, Oxford. The Bishop of Reading and her team work from St. Birinus House in Theale. A new temporary Area Office for Buckingham was established in 2024 in Stone, near Aylesbury and a permanent purpose built office is in planning.

The Diocesan Board of Finance, chaired by Sir Hector Sants, has an annual operating budget of about £30 million and in 2023 generated a surplus with a return on parish share of nearly 95%.

Thanks to the generous giving of our parishes we are not in a position of having to reduce clergy numbers or support staff at the present time beyond normal reviews of staffing in as vacancies arise.

Common Vision

Over the last seven years the Diocese has been seeking to live out a common vision centred around our vocation to be a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world: more contemplative, more compassionate and more courageous.

Our common vision process is creative, locally shaped and contextually appropriate for each part of our diverse diocese. It is not a series of top-down programmes, reflecting that urban Slough is very different from the market town of Witney; the rural communities of West Berkshire are subtly different from the rural communities of the Cotswolds; the commuter belt in Amersham is a culturally distinct from the new town of Bicester. For this reason, we intentionally seek to develop, encourage and resource initiatives which are local and close to the ground.

We have currently discerned five key strategic priority areas within our Common Vision:

- Christian formation, evangelism and discipleship
- Environmental action
- Growing new congregations
- Schools, children and young people
- Addressing poverty and inequality

The Bishops and Archdeacons share in leadership of these priority areas in portfolios which can be adjusted to the gifts of particular candidates. The two major areas in development in our Common Vision is our strategy for growing our engagement with children, young people and families across every Deanery and a major new initiative to grow the capacity of the Church of England in Milton Keynes.

The Diocese established a Development Fund for parishes in 2018 which has so far invested more than £4 million in local projects to further our common vision. We have also benefitted from national Strategic Development Fund (SDF) funding for resource hubs across the Diocese as part of our vision to grow new congregations. The SDF funded hubs in the Buckingham Archdeaconry are in Bletchley and Water Eaton in Milton Keynes; in High Wycombe and in Slough. It is likely that we will make a further bid for national funding in 2025 or 2026 focussed around our two areas in development.

Every new senior appointment to the diocesan team is made on the basis of a commitment to this Common Vision.

Schools and Education

The Oxford Diocesan Board of Education plays a significant role in education across the Diocese. There are 34 Voluntary Aided schools, 28 Voluntary Controlled schools and 19 Academies (plus 4 non-church academies) in the Buckingham Archdeaconry.

Equality and Diversity

The Diocese has made significant steps forward in racial justice and encouraging UKME Anglicans in recent years, as well as in disability awareness. We have a recently appointed team of Bishops Advisers in Women's Ministry.

International links

The Diocese has four key diocesan links: Kimberley and Kuruman in South Africa (part of the Anglican Province of Southern Africa), Nandyal in the Church of South India, Växjö, a diocese in the Lutheran Church of Sweden and a new link with the Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands formed in 2024.

Safeguarding

We are committed to promoting the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults and protecting them from harm. As all leaders in the diocese, the Archdeacon of Buckingham will work in developing a culture where safeguarding is regarded as the responsibility of the whole church, and at the heart of our mission; they will exercise responsibility for promoting a safer Church in the Buckingham Area, ensuring pastoral care of survivors, and be coherent with the safeguarding policies and practice guidance of the Church of England whilst actively engaging in continuous learning in this area. The recent independent review of our safeguarding by Ineqe can be found [here](#).

The Archdeacon of Buckingham will play a key role in continuing to develop safeguarding across the Diocese and the Episcopal Area with key colleagues, often leading with the Area Safeguarding Adviser on safeguarding case management and chairing Core Groups.

Sharing oversight

Three parishes in the Area have passed resolutions under the Women Priests and Bishops measure and are under the oversight of the Bishop of Oswestry, with whom collaboration is excellent.

In all appointments, we are consciously seeking diversity in our teams in terms of gender, race, disability and the differing theological positions.

There is a range of views across the Diocese on Living in Love and Faith and a diverse episcopal and archdiaconal team which holds together well. Some of the larger and more conservative parishes in the Diocese are in the Buckingham Episcopal Area including a small number who have sought alternative oversight and different arrangements for the payment of parish share.

The Diocese is committed to upholding the Five Guiding Principles as set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Priests and Bishops, and to promote the flourishing of churches across the range of the theological breadth of the Church of England.

Buckingham Archdeaconry



Historical and Geographical Background

The Archdeaconry of Buckingham was created in the eleventh Century, within the diocese of Lincoln. Since 1845 it has been part of the diocese of Oxford, and (legally) an Episcopal Area since 1978.

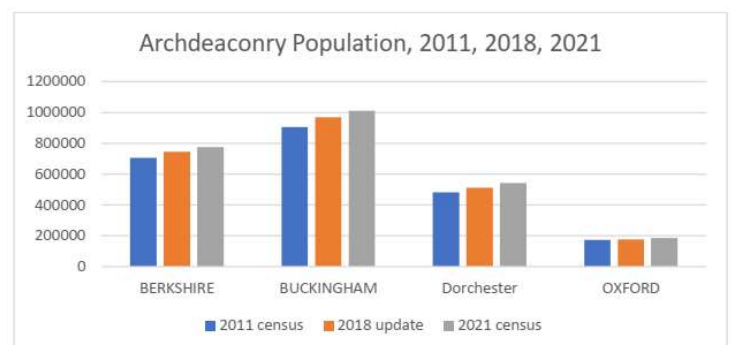
Buckingham Archdeaconry stretches from the Thames to the Northamptonshire border, taking in the modern County of Buckinghamshire, with Milton Keynes and Slough unitary authority areas, along with fragments of other local government districts, including Windsor and Maidenhead.

Sociologically, there is a shire county centred on Aylesbury, the Chiltern area (Metroland), and a southern post-industrial belt with semi-rural and suburban surrounds centred on Slough and High Wycombe.

A Fast-Growing Population

The population of Bucks is just over 1,000,000 and rising (2021 Census). Bucks is the largest of Oxford's Episcopal Areas by population.

New large developments and accompanying infrastructure to the North and South of Aylesbury, around the town of Buckingham and around Milton Keynes are driving growth which is projected to continue well into the century. These developments offer a significant challenge (and opportunity) for the traditional parochial system that operates throughout the archdeaconry. Pioneer posts in these areas are being supported alongside local churches exploring new ways of being church leading to a vibrant "mixed economy".



Milton Keynes and Newport Deaneries

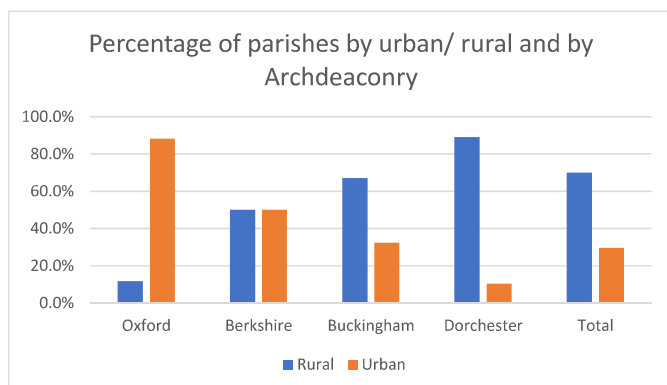
Milton Keynes (MK) has grown by 1.5% per annum over the past 10 years to a population of some 287,000 over the past 10 years. This growth is projected to continue into the future leading to a forecast population of around 500,000 by 2050 making MK by far the largest city in the Diocese. The long-term plans for MK are further underpinned by East-West Rail, connecting MK with Oxford and ultimately connecting with Cambridge too. Along with upgrades to the

East-West Road network, the “Oxford Cambridge Arc” is becoming both a focus for regional industrial development and housing development. In that sense, MK will ultimately sit within a significant swathe of development stretching beyond present diocesan boundaries. The MK Deanery comprises 13 parishes with 31 churches of which 24 are in the five ecumenical parishes. MK is the location of two Church planting hubs, funded by the Diocese and the Strategic Development Fund. It is anticipated that a bid will be made in 2025-2026 to the Strategic Ministry Investment Board for substantial funding toward the strengthening of the Church in MK.

In seeking to address missional change in MK, one distinctive issue to bear in mind is the ecumenical nature of much of the city. While the outlying large existing settlements subsumed into MK in the 1970’s and 1980’s (Bletchley, Stony Stratford, Newport Pagnell, Wolverton) kept their existing parish churches, as did the 14 villages also falling within the original Development boundary. The growing city was deliberately planned as an ecumenical city and so for 75% of MK residents, living in newly developed areas, their parish church is part of a Local Ecumenical Partnership. This is often a real gift when it comes to strategic missional planning and change.

Newport Deanery comprises a large number of smaller rural villages with parish churches networked together effectively to provide ministerial and lay leadership. The substantial urban settlement of Newport Pagnell contains as many people as the remainder of the deanery combined and will be further stretched in the near future as the growth of Milton Keynes leads to the building of new estates in previously rural areas. Provision of ministry for these new estates is a significant forthcoming missional challenge.

Rural North Bucks



The Archdeacon of Buckingham has to spend a great deal of time in the car, on a fairly overloaded road system. **Mursley, Claydon, Buckingham and the west of Aylesbury deaneries** are distinctively rural, with their own particular patterns of community and Church life and their own missional challenges.

The Area is committed to the support and to the health of rural parishes and church closures are few and far between (only two during the Episcopacy of the previous Bishop of Buckingham). This commitment to locality and rurality means, however, that there is a constant balance to be struck between the cost of ministry and its affordability in rural benefices. Rural Buckinghamshire has a fairly large number of team



ministries. This enables the flexible deployment of different types of clergy (such as house for duty, half time, self-supporting as well as full-time stipendiary). Significant use of interim ministry posts has been made over the past few years.

An additional challenge/ opportunity for rural parishes is the arrival of new houses, both local developments adding to the populations of small villages and more major developments encroaching on previously rural parishes as major centres of population grow quickly (especially affecting villages around Buckingham, MK and Aylesbury). Rural parishes have responded with commendable flexibility, adapting their buildings to make them more accessible and hospitable and adding more informal family friendly services such as Breakfast Church/ Café Church / Messy Church/ Forest Church in several benefices. One issue post-Covid which remains a significant challenge is the number of vacancies for parish officers. This is particularly concentrated in rural benefices where it can be very difficult to recruit Churchwardens and Treasurers.

Mid Bucks: Aylesbury and Wendover

In addition to the rural benefices mentioned above, the town of **Aylesbury** is an important centre for the civic, economic and community life of the county. Aylesbury is served by a diverse variety of churches and there is a good history of cooperation in mission across the town.

While around a third the size of Milton Keynes, the growing population of Aylesbury should not be overlooked.

Church plants at Broughton, Kingsbrook and Berryfields in North and East Aylesbury have been a Deanery and Area priority over the last few years. Considerable missional creativity and investment has gone into planting some now sizable and flourishing new congregations. Similar investment and creativity will soon be needed in South Aylesbury as new estates multiply across the Aylesbury/Wendover border.

Wendover Deanery encompasses the Chiltern Ridge. This is an area of small villages and towns, farms, woodlands and commuters. While Wendover is overall more settled in housing terms than Aylesbury, there is nonetheless a significant level of development being built. The area has also been significantly impacted with the building of HS2 and in particular the construction of the tunnel mouth near Missenden continues to cause significant disruption to the local community. Churches in the small towns of Wendover are particularly strong and have a significant impact in their communities.

South Bucks: Wycombe and Amersham



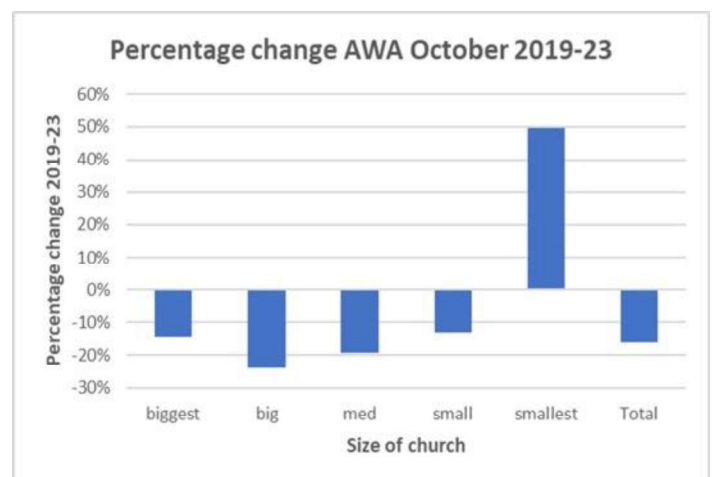
In many ways **Wycombe Deanery** is thriving and hopeful, but the picture is inevitably a mixed one. Some village churches are in good order and repair, but others are facing the combined challenge of escalating building and maintenance costs, aging congregations and an impending crisis in the supply of volunteers and office holders.

The larger churches in the Deanery relate well to one another and share best practice and resources with one another and with smaller churches. Chapter and Synod are very active and well attended. There is a sense of anticipation that God is at work.

The heart of Wycombe Deanery is High Wycombe itself. The team of 7 Churches are diverse, both in churchmanship and the demographics of their communities, with areas of severe deprivation and food poverty characterising much of the centre of the town. The churches have an important role to play in supporting and serving needy families in the area. Wycombe Deanery has invested in a paid part time Children and Youth Network Leader to encourage and develop this vital ministry. The deanery is also committed to supporting rural churches with a dedicated forum and promoting the diocesan commitment to creation care with a team of parish eco representatives.

With its proximity to London, good communications near the M25, M40 corridor and Chiltern Rail link, **Amersham** is relatively wealthy and prosperous. There are a substantial number of people at the centre of finance, law, commerce and national affairs. The creative industries, especially the film industry, also play a significant role. Local grammar schools have a high reputation and are especially popular with second or third generation Asian families moving out from London. Houses tend to be expensive, and often both parents of young families are in paid employment.

There is a higher-than-average attendance at Church across much of South Bucks. Village churches are often in exceptionally good order and repair, and small-town churches of every tradition are thriving, with a real diversity of Anglican approaches to worship and mission

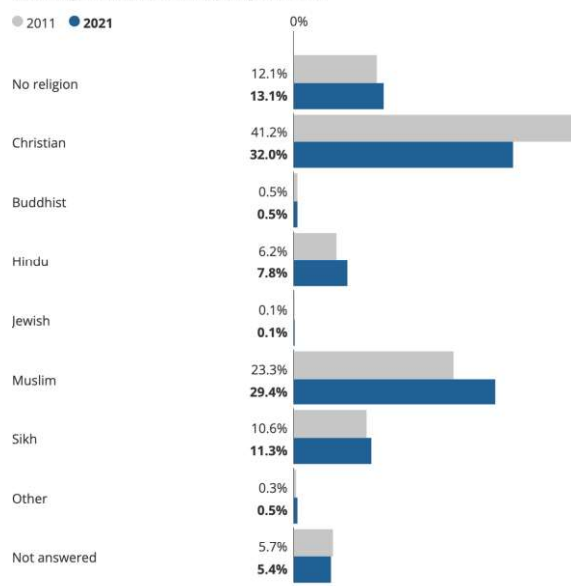


Some of the larger congregations in the Archdeaconry are in this area. However, the congregation size as recorded by the data recorded every October shows a slow recovery from Covid. Usual Sunday attendance of 100+ are on average still over 15% down on 2019. Work with children and young people both in Amersham and Wycombe is often supported by paid workers, and often have highly professional organists, choir directors or worship leaders.

There is a flip side to the prosperity of South Bucks. Many towns have significant areas of multiple deprivation. Here the church can be found providing much needed support for needy families through foodbanks and other vital support.

Burnham and Slough

Percentage of usual residents by religion, Slough



Source: Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021

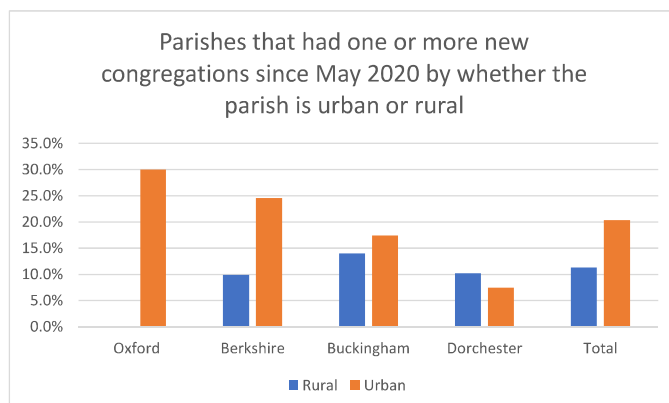
While not quite at the same scale of the changes going on in Milton Keynes, nonetheless, Slough is also changing quickly. The radical regeneration of the town centre and in particular the arrival of the Elizabeth Line connecting Slough to the tube network at high speed is having a significant impact.

The religious character of the town very also distinctive (see graph). An intercultural Church Planting Hub at St Paul's Slough is funded by the Diocese and the SDF.

Under the leadership of the full-time Area Dean, Slough has recently been through a major program of restructuring of ministry which has enabled the Deanery to approach a balanced financial situation for the first time in decades and to address a range of significant missional opportunities.

General Missional Issues and Priorities

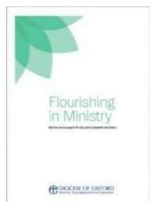
Although they have areas of significant wealth, some parts of Slough, Wycombe, Milton Keynes and Aylesbury also experience great social deprivation. It should be noted that a cause for hope for the Area is the significant ministry going on in "Estate Parishes" in these areas. Often, our Estate parishes are home to growing and diverse congregations with younger than average age and a higher than usual number of young people and families in attendance. Investment in Estate Ministry is another Area priority.



The Area Team, working with support from the Dept of Mission and Ministry, continues to work to support parishes and Deaneries who are responding in creative ways to the Diocesan call to continue to plant new congregations and to develop plans to reach out to children, families and young people.

Ministerial Deployment

Bucks has 288 congregations in 188 parishes, 138 benefices and 10 deaneries. There are 112 stipendiary clergy, 17 stipendiary curates, 33 Self-supporting ministers, 16 house for duty clergy. All stipendiary clergy are deployed through deanery plans. A particular priority is care of the clergy, which especially post-pandemic is more than ever a priority. Support of clergy experiencing long term sickness is shared and supported by an excellent HR Team in Church House.



We want every minister across the diocese to flourish in their ministry, see [Flourishing in Ministry - Diocese of Oxford \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org/flourishing-in-ministry). Further support is offered through the diocese's Employee Assistance Programme.

The Diocese is committed to upholding the *Five Guiding Principles* as set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Priests and Bishops and to promote the flourishing of churches across the range of the theological breadth

of the Church of England.

We currently have around 125 active retired and other clergy living in Buckinghamshire with Permission to Officiate. Various Institutions employ chaplains, including the RAF (whose HQ is in High Wycombe), 4 major hospital trusts, 4 Prisons, and various Universities and Private Schools (including Eton College, Stowe and Wycombe Abbey) which employ Anglican chaplains. Around 50% of our clergy are female, with a fair number of clergy couples.

The Buckingham Archdeaconry has, for the past couple of years, had a vacancy rate of around 25. This is projected to continue, particularly because of clergy retirement, meaning that a significant amount of time is taken up with recruitment, which is shared with the Bishop and Associate Archdeacon.

The Area Team

The Area system and the size of the Buckingham Archdeaconry require Bishop, Archdeacon and full time Associate Archdeacon to work closely alongside each other with a very high degree of trust, collaboration, and delegation between themselves and with Area Deans and Lay Chairs, with whom they meet monthly.

As well as able central diocesan support and legal staff, there is a (60%) Director of Ordinands (DDO) for Buckingham Archdeaconry, a Parish Development Adviser, a full time Area Dean for Rural Mission and Development, a full time discipleship enabler (youth and childrens ministry) and an Area Safeguarding Adviser. The team also works closely with the Diocesan Schools Advisers amongst the 75 Church schools in the archdeaconry. We have three Commissaries who undertake some archdiaconal tasks on behalf of the Archdeacon of Buckingham. Additionally, the Area Team is ably supported by three administrators (2.4FTE) and a Bishop's Adviser for Women's Ministry.

Key Challenges of the Role

We have identified the following key challenges for this role at this next appointment:

To be an excellent (and traditional) Archdeacon, knowing the clergy and parishes in your care, enabling strong appointments, and leading within the Area Team on matters of resources, buildings and delivery.

To enable the ministry and leadership of the Bishop of Buckingham to focus on mission in the public square; the spiritual formation of the Church across the Area and the overall strategy for the Area.

To build good relationships with immediate colleagues in the Area Team based on shared prayer and mutual support and to enable the team to flourish.

To lead on challenging situations of conflict, safeguarding and discipline in parishes with clarity and compassion and to manage the considerable case load which comes with the role.

To play your part as a senior member of the Diocesan Team according to your own gifts and present needs and to live out the Diocesan vision.

In all of this to watch over yourself and your immediate colleagues, modelling what it means to flourish in ministry.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

SECTION ONE: DETAILS OF POST

Role title:	Archdeacon of Buckingham
Scope:	Diocese of Oxford
Episcopal Area:	Buckingham Archdeaconry
Accountable to:	Bishop of Oxford and Bishop of Buckingham
Accountable for:	Associate Archdeacon of Buckingham; Personal Assistant; office administrative support
Type of Role:	Full-time stipendiary with housing provision
Conditions of Service:	This role falls within the Clergy Terms of Service formally known as Common Tenure.

SECTION TWO: CONTEXT

Wider Context

As a diocese, we are committed to our Common Vision, within which five priority areas have been identified, all supported centrally by resources, training, conferences, workshops, missionaries and much more. We believe in the call to become more Christ-like for the sake of God's world: contemplative, compassionate, and courageous is something that is widely and deeply owned.

The work of the Archdeacon will support the Diocese as we seek to fulfil this vision.

SECTION THREE: ROLE PURPOSE AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

General: The Ministry of Archdeacons

Archdeacons are called to share in the mission of the church, exercising their ministry in close collaboration with the Bishop. They play a significant role in the recruitment, oversight, discipline, and pastoral care of the clergy.

The Archdeacon is to ensure that the Bishop is aware of the needs and concerns of clergy and people, and to foster in them a fuller sense of their responsibilities as members of Christ's body. S/he shares the ordinary jurisdiction of the Area Bishop and exercises the jurisdiction of the consistory court of the diocese as the chancellor directs. S/he presents ordination candidates to the Bishop. S/he inducts and installs ministers conducts visitations of the parishes and cares for Churchwardens in their office. Archdeacons work closely with the Area Bishop, Associate

Archdeacons, Area Deans and Lay Officers to help grow the churches in their care. Byword, deed, and example, s/he encourages good administration and due process, exercising authority with wisdom, gentleness, and vision; in all things remembering that s/he ministers as priest and pastor in the church of God.

The legal responsibilities of an Archdeacon in the Church of England derived from Canon 22 “of Archdeacons” underpin the duties and responsibilities of the post holder and they are detailed in the enclosed document¹

Specifics:

The most attractive element of the post of Archdeacon of Buckingham is the fact that they will be working with and be a member of a very supportive diocesan team in a diverse Archdeaconry that respects, honours and works across all traditions within a Diocese that is financially secure.

Location

To work from the Buckingham Area Office in Stone, with working from home on occasion at the clergy house provided under common tenure, with and visits to churches/clergy as required.

Terms of Service

As outlined in the Statement of Particulars issued alongside this Role Description.

Housing Provision

Comfortable housing will be provided in Aylesbury. Further information can be found in Appendix B.

Accountability and Support

Responsible to the Bishop of Buckingham for the work in the Archdeaconry, with regular meetings for consultation and contact as needed. The Archdeacon will supervise the Associate's work and be available for advice. PA support is provided and the Archdeacon will have line management responsibilities for the postholder.

Working relationships

The Archdeacon will be a member of the Bishop's Staff and will be a member of the following teams/committees/trusts: Buckingham Area Team, Bishop's Council, Diocesan Synod, Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, Archdeaconry of Buckingham Mission and Pastoral Committee, Diocesan Advisory Committee, Diocesan Buildings Committee, Bayne Benefaction and others to match gifts and skills of the individual in role. The Archdeacon meets regularly with and works closely with the Area Bishop and the Area Team.

Main responsibilities

1. To be a member of the Bishop of Oxford's staff team and the share in the leadership of the Diocese.

¹ Please refer to the 'Appendix A – Legal responsibilities of an Archdeacon in the Church of England' document attached to this Role Description

2. To pray with and work collaboratively with the Bishop of Buckingham and the Area Team in supporting the parishes and sector ministries of the Buckingham Episcopal Area.
3. To work strategically with the other Archdeacons of the Diocese to share good practice and co-ordinate property, fabric, finance and mission planning matters across the diocese to ensure parity and coherent policy.
4. To work closely with the Diocesan Secretary, the Registrar, Heads of Departments and other Diocesan staff.
5. To be committed to the diocesan vision and strategy.
6. To be acquainted with the Archdeaconry and develop wisdom and experience based on the stories of its churches and parishes.
7. To preach and teach the Gospel around the Archdeaconry.
8. To exercise the Archdeacon's statutory responsibilities and to share these responsibilities with the Associate Archdeacon, Area Deans and other colleagues, so as to be able to give pastoral and strategic support to clergy and parishes.
9. To help align deployment of clergy and other ministers to local missional planning through deanery structures.
10. To encourage parishes into growth (spiritual and numerical) by making new Christians and deepening engagement with faith in a variety of ways.
11. To work with the Bishop and Associate Archdeacon in sharing responsibility for the appointment processes. This will involve leading vacancies as directed by the Bishop. In addition, there may be involvement in any diocesan Church House appointments requiring an Archdeacon.
12. To encourage and support parishes in fulfilling their parish share commitments and teaching good stewardship whilst acting on any issue concerning Parish Share, including being a member of the Parish Share Working Party
13. To be an initial resource to Churchwardens and clergy on legal questions.
14. To show due regard in handling any safeguarding disclosures and as a member of any Core Groups in place for particular cases in line with the Church of England's expectations.
15. To work with difficult and complex situations as they arise, and to follow these through to resolution involving other colleagues as required. This may include investigation of complaints and briefing the Area Bishop regularly on progress.
16. To play an active role in the Bishop's Ministerial Development Review scheme.
17. To work with the Property Department in the provision of clergy housing, including the approval of clergy removal expenses.
18. To review the Archdeacon's Inspection checklist and certificate and update; to liaise with Area Deans on their pattern for inspections and check the paperwork they are working with and returning; to undertake some inspections and update the Archdeacon's record of inspections.
19. To take on such other tasks as the Diocesan or Area Bishop requires.
20. **Meetings:** to attend, where possible
 - Team and Staff Meetings (weekly)
 - Area Dean and Lay Chair Meetings (monthly)
 - Chair the Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee (quarterly)
 - Safeguarding Core Group Meetings (chairing where necessary)

21. Miscellaneous:

- To keep a record of correspondence and communication with clergy, churchwardens, and others and to ensure the Archdeacon's Office has copies of these for the parish files.
- To maintain confidentiality at all times on sensitive matters.
- a. To keep a note of expenses incurred in the course of this work and to seek reimbursement.

SECTION FOUR: PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are looking for someone who:

- Is a member of clergy in Priest's Orders conferred by the Church of England or a Church in communion with it, or whose orders it recognises, for at least six years (this is required by Canon C22(1))
- Has leadership experience within the Church of England.
- Can develop into a trusted and competent practitioner in four areas where we are looking for potential as much as experience:
 - Church law in theory and practice
 - Buildings and how they support the Church's mission
 - Financial literacy, strategy and tactics
 - Human resources and clergy support
- Has extensive experience and knowledge of parish issues especially in multi-parish and rural contexts.
- Enables people in parishes to do and be the best that they can by being both pastoral and relational, focussing on the unity that comes through exercising patience and grace.
- Has demonstrable experience of the effective handling safeguarding concerns in line with Church of England protocols, including participation in Core Groups, with a compassionate focus on victims and survivors.
- A clear understanding of their role in creating healthy safeguarding cultures.
- Is accessible and can be trusted to challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Can demonstrate experience of having navigated conflict well, including facilitating groups where conflict has become problematic, as well as addressing issues before they escalate.
- Is a role model for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across the diocese and champions diocesan efforts to welcome under-represented and minoritised groups.
- Is enthusiastic and energetic about church growth and supports all the good things happening in the archdeaconry.
- Is an inspiring and charismatic spiritual leader who is confident in sharing their faith and communicates effectively in an incisive and decisive way with clear directions
- Acts as a bridge between Church House, Oxford, and the parishes.
- Takes a proactive lead on key issues by speaking truth to power but also is able to listen and accepts a challenge.
- Enforces canon law and clergy discipline in a pastoral and creative way.
- Has excellent communication skills and proven ability to work collaboratively within a multi-disciplinary team and with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Challenges the cultural mindset with creative thinking that is focused on mission.

- Navigates complex church structures and systems with ease and can be trusted in their ability to find solutions for those they serve.
- Demonstrates resilience during times of difficulty and pressure, with well-developed spiritual practices that sustain and inspire them in their ministry.
- Is willing and able to travel extensively by car around the archdeaconry, and to and from Church House, Oxford, for meetings. There are also regional and national commitments.

Role description signed off by: Bishop of Oxford

Date: May 2025

To be reviewed annually

Application Information:

Please apply through the Church of England Pathways website.

Closing date for receipt of applications: midnight on Thursday 10th July 2025

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to participate in virtual 1:1 meetings with the Bishop of Buckingham.

The selection process will take place at the Area Office on Monday 21st July 2025 (meetings with specialist panels) and Church House Oxford on Tuesday 22nd July 2025 (formal interview).

Appendix A: The Legal Duties and Responsibilities of Archdeacons

Whilst the Archdeacons' duties and powers exercising an ordinary jurisdiction are laid down in Canon Law and in a variety of other legal instruments, the essential nature of the role has been described as 'being a good steward so that others are freed to be the worshipping, witnessing and ministering Church'. The principal areas of statutory responsibility are summarised below:

- 1. Diocesan Governance** (ex officio of: Synod, Bishop's Council, Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), Parsonage Board, Mission and Pastoral Committee)
- 2. Parish Governance** (Visitations, PCC disputes, Recruitment, Inductions)
- 3. Property and Buildings** (Temporary Reordering Licenses, List B permissions, bridge role between parish, DAC and Chancellor holding the mission portfolio central, Inspection powers)
- 4. Pastoral Reorganisation** (an interested party in all reorganisations but frequently the initiator of new schemes)
- 5. Clergy: pastoral care and discipline** (assisting the bishop to discharge his/ her duty of care in the pastoral care of the clergy including bringing to their attention any issues that need attention as well as examination of candidates for ordination.
- 6. Additional Responsibilities Accruing to the Role of Archdeacon**

Besides the "traditional" expectations of the role set out above, in recent years the following additional duties and responsibilities have become increasingly central to the ministry of archdeacons:

a. Safeguarding

- i. Offering advice and support to parishes in conjunction with the specialist safeguarding team
- ii. Participating in and chairing safeguarding Core Groups as well as following up any actions
- iii. Sharing in ensuring compliance with safeguarding legislation at parish level
- iv. Detailed involvement on a day to day basis in complex safeguarding cases alongside the safeguarding team.

b. Clergy terms of service (Common Tenure)

Working closely with the HR team, the archdeacon is:

- i. The Bishop's nominated role to prepare and issue statement of particulars or any statement of change letters to clergy on Common Tenure
- ii. Responsible for signing off role descriptions for licensed stipendiary clergy
- iii. A ministerial development reviewer and follows up any actions deriving from them
- iv. Appointed by the bishop to oversee an enquiry into the capability of a licensed clergy
- v. Usually responsible for overseeing the formal stages of the grievance

c. Clergy Discipline Measure Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Complaint Handling

- i. Act as a complainant when appropriate including: compiling, organising and lodging a complaint where a serious shortcoming in standards of clergy conduct has been alleged
- ii. Investigating complaints made against clergy or parish officers, which fall short of CDM issues, which can be complex and time consuming
- iii. Work in situations of pastoral/ relationship breakdown is significant

d. Advice to Parish Clergy As the amount of necessary secular legislation re health and safety, data integrity, finance and charity governance increases and finds its application at parish level, the need for expert advice to those “on the ground” grows – often archdeacons are the first port of call for advice on these issues as well as the more familiar agendas around church buildings and churchyards.

e. “Growth Agenda” - the need for advice and leadership in mission and reorganisation for mission grows in a changing world – often archdeacons are in the position of helping the diocesan vision to be translated into practise on the ground at deanery and parish level. It is anticipated that this will apply in Oxford’s case to various aspects of the implementation of Common Vision at parish and deanery level.

f. Clergy Wellbeing - Care for clergy wellbeing has always been a primary responsibility of archdeacons. As the number of clergy decreases and clergy stress increases archidiaconal time to visit and care for the clergy is becoming ever more necessary and ever more precious.

Appendix B: Housing provision for Archdeacon of Buckingham

The property is a detached house, built in the 1970s/80s. It has 4 bedrooms, a study and mature garden. It has been assessed as having an Energy Performance Certificate C.

Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



Kitchen-Diner



Rear Garden

