



LINCOLN READERS CONSTITUTION AND RULES 2017

(as amended 07/10/17)

Introduction

Reader ministry was restored to the Church of England in 1866 and by 19th September 1891 there was enough momentum in Lincolnshire for a meeting of those 'interested in the subject of lay help' to form the Lincoln Diocesan Lay Readers' Guild, inviting the Bishop of Lincoln, Edward King, to 'kindly consent to be president of the Guild'. The Bishop proceeded to give strong support to the Guild and presided at its annual meetings in the Old Palace.

They voted to 'give help to clergymen and others in the direction of mission work', at first through 'giving addresses and reading services in mission schoolrooms'. By October 3rd 1891 they voted that 'a master of the Guild be appointed (and an) Honorary Secretary and three Council members elected'. The first Annual General Meeting took place October 1st 1892.

This constitution is in the tradition of those founding meetings and continues to give shape to the ongoing life of Reader ministry in the Diocese. It also reflects the necessary ways in which Reader ministry, a licensed lay ministry under the Canon Law of the Church of England, is integrated within the whole mission and ministry of the Diocese.

1. Lincoln Reader Ministry

1.1. The Lincoln Readers' organisation shall consist of all Readers licensed by the Bishop of Lincoln, those with his Permission to Officiate, those appointed Reader Emeritus, the Diocesan Warden and Area Wardens.

1.2. Lincoln Readers shall be governed by the current House of Bishops' Regulations [see Church House Website] and will be

advised by the Central Readers' Council of the Church of England (CRC).

1.3. Lincoln Readers will be guided by all current and future policy documents of the Ministry Division of the Church of England. New directions from the Ministry Division related to Reader Ministry will be adopted as published.

2. Governing Body

The Governing Body of Lincoln Readers shall be accountable to the Bishop of Lincoln and the Diocesan Council. Each Governing Body shall be of five years duration.

3. Governing Body Membership

A member of the Bishop's Senior Staff
Diocesan Warden (appointed by the Bishop of Grimsby or Grantham as appropriate)

Area Wardens (appointed by the Bishop of Grimsby or Grantham as appropriate)

Area Secretaries (Readers elected by their Areas)

A Reader shall be nominated by each Area to deputise for the Area Secretary, if unable to attend.

Any Reader appointed to the CRC executive committee and its principle working parties.

A representative from the student body.

The Bishop has the right to appoint two additional members to the Governing Body if necessary (for example to liaise with the Governing Body over such issues as Quality Assurance in training).

Elected by the Annual Meeting from among Lincoln Readers

Chair of the Governing Body

Secretary General (and first CRC Representative)

Assistant Secretaries General

Second CRC Representative, who shall be a Reader

3.1 Notes

3.1.1. In the event of any Area Secretary or Second CRC Representative being elected to the post of Secretary General or Chair, they will be considered to have resigned their previous post (s) with effect from the date of taking office of Secretary General. The previous post(s) shall be refilled by the procedures covering casual vacancies in Appendix A.

3.1.2. The Governing Body shall be responsible for the transaction of Lincoln Readers' business. It may appoint sub-committees and

working parties as it considers appropriate. Members of such sub committees and working parties need not be members of the Governing Body, nor need they necessarily be Readers or Trainees.

Where such sub-Committees and working parties are appointed, they shall be responsible to the Governing Body, to which they shall be required to submit regular reports.

3.1.3. The Governing Body shall meet as often as shall be deemed necessary to transact the business of Lincoln Readers, but not less than three times annually.

3.1.4. **Standing Committee**

The Standing Committee shall consist of the Diocesan Warden, the Secretary General, assistant Secretaries General, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Second CRC Representative.

It shall be empowered to meet to deal with any matters requiring attention between meetings of the Governing Body. It shall be convened by either the Diocesan Warden or the Secretary General after consultation with the Chair of the Governing Body.

4. Diocesan Warden of Readers

On behalf of the Bishop, the Diocesan Warden shall be responsible for the oversight of all aspects of Reader Ministry and its development in the Diocese and shall be answerable to the Bishop.

4.1. The Diocesan Warden shall co-ordinate the work of the Area Wardens.

4.2. The Diocesan Warden shall call an annual meeting of the full governing body, which may be residential.

4.3. The Diocesan Warden shall encourage good practice in collaborative ministry among all licensed and commissioned ministers in the Diocese, while interpreting the distinctive ministry of Readers in the life of the Diocese and the mission of the Church.

4.4 The Diocesan Warden shall seek to work collaboratively within all existing and future structures provided to oversee public ministry in the Diocese.

This will include liaison with

- The Lincoln School of Theology and its staff

- The Continuing Ministerial Development Adviser
- The Diocesan director of Ordinands and Vocations Adviser

4.5. The Diocesan Warden shall recommend to the Bishop candidates for licensing and re-licensing.

4.6. The Diocesan Warden in liaison with Area Wardens shall have pastoral oversight of all Readers.

4.7. The Diocesan Warden shall be responsible for the promotion and organisation of opportunities for life long learning and formation for all Readers.

4.8. The Diocesan Warden is customarily invited to serve on the Methodist District's Worship Strategy Committee for Local Preachers and shall promote opportunities for fellowship and mutual learning between Readers and Local Preachers.

4.9. The Diocesan Warden shall be responsible for the monitoring of all financial matters relating to Lincoln Readers including the negotiation of all budgetary provision necessary to resource Reader Ministry and the work of Lincoln Readers.

4.10. As far as possible, the Diocesan Warden will visit at least one Area meeting in each Area per annum.

4.11. The Diocesan Warden shall advise the Bishop on the appointment of Area Wardens, the granting of licences, the Bishop's Permission to Officiate and the appointment of Readers Emeritus.

4.12. With the Bishop's permission, the Diocesan Warden may, from time to time, act as Bishop's Commissary for the licensing of new Reader Ministry, for example, on a Reader moving parish. From time to time, with the Bishop's permission, some areas of the Diocesan Warden's responsibilities may be delegated to Area Wardens or other officers of Lincoln Readers. In the event of a vacancy arising for the post of Diocesan Warden, the Secretary General and the Chair of Lincoln Readers' Governing Body shall consult with the Bishop and agree arrangements for one of the Area Wardens to assume temporarily the Diocesan Warden's responsibility, pending the appointment of a permanent successor.

4.13. The Diocesan Warden shall, when necessary, represent the Lincoln Readers at international, national, regional and other meetings relating to Reader Ministry. Where necessary,

participation in such meetings shall be co-ordinated with the Secretary General and the second CRC Representative to ensure adequate representation.

5. Chair of the Governing Body

The Chair of the Governing Body shall take the Chair at all meetings of the Governing Body, the Standing Committee and the Annual General Meeting. In the event of the absence of the Chair of the Governing Body, or during any vacancy for this post, the Second CRC Representative shall take the Chair.

6. Secretary General

6.1. The Secretary General shall be responsible with the Standing Committee for the Minutes of the Governing Body, the executive committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting.

6.2. The Secretary General, in liaison with the Chair and Diocesan Warden shall convene the Governing Body and the Annual General Meetings.

6.3. The Secretary General shall be responsible for the co-ordination of both the Annual Service and the Annual General Meeting in liaison with the Diocesan Warden.

6.4. The Secretary General shall assist the Diocesan Warden in the co-ordination and support of the work of all Areas and Area Secretaries.

6.5. The Secretary General shall also be responsible for ensuring that appropriate records are maintained on behalf of Lincoln Readers. In undertaking this responsibility, the Secretary General shall liaise with the other Standing Committee members.

6.6. The Secretary General shall be the first representative of Lincoln Readers at the Central Readers' Council. In liaison with the Diocesan Warden, the Secretary General shall handle matters relating to the Central Readers' Council on behalf of Lincoln Readers.

6.7. In the event of the Secretary General's absence and during any vacancy for this post, an Assistant Secretary General shall cover the Secretary General's functions.

6.8. The Secretary General from time to time will liaise with the Appropriate Archdeacon on Reader issues, especially those of deployment.

7. Assistant Secretaries General

7.1. Up to two Assistant Secretaries General shall be elected from a different Archdeaconry from the Secretary General.

7.2. The Assistant Secretaries General from time to time shall liaise with the Appropriate Archdeacon on Reader issues, especially those of deployment, in consultation with the Diocesan Warden.

7.3. The Assistant Secretaries General shall serve on the Standing Committee and offer support to the Secretary General's tasks.

8. Reader Areas, Mission Areas and Ecumenism

8.1. As a significant ministerial resource, Reader ministry needs to be effectively deployed in the service of the Mission Areas and any future mission strategies of the Diocese of Lincoln. Collaborative ministry between all forms of ordained and lay ministry is to be encouraged.

8.2. Reader ministry structures will continue to be developed and employed to further these goals including the monitoring of the shape and size of Reader Areas.

8.3. Reader Area structures are designed to give a necessary critical mass for appropriately sized Reader fellowships, the organisation of some local ministerial formation, provision of pastoral and spiritual care for Readers and the effective management of Reader deployment.

8.4. The Reader Areas must be sensitive to and supportive of the Mission Areas and Deaneries through close liaison with Rural Deans and by assisting in the deployment of Reader services.

8.5. Reader Areas are encouraged to foster relationships with Methodist Circuit Local Preachers

9. Area Wardens

9.1. Normally, Area Wardens shall be clerks in Holy Orders resident in their respective Areas. Each Area Warden shall be appointed by

the Bishop of Grimsby or Grantham in liaison with the Diocesan Warden for a renewable period of five years.

9.2. Ministers in covenant relationship with the Church of England, may also be eligible for the post of Area Warden at the discretion of the Bishops.

9.3. At the Bishop's discretion, a Reader might be considered eligible for the post of Area Warden.

9.4. The duties of an Area Warden shall include:

- Pastoral oversight and supervision of the work of Readers within the Area. These tasks being undertaken in liaison with the Diocesan Warden and the Readers' respective incumbents.
- Local Continuing Ministerial Education and Formation within the Area, undertaken in liaison with the Diocesan Warden.
- Liaison with the work of the Area Secretary, including the arrangement for a Secretary's duties to be fulfilled by others in the event of a Secretary's absence or illness.
- Convening Area Reader meetings to facilitate communication, fellowship, formation and education.
- Enabling the spiritual and pastoral resourcing of Readers within the Area.
- Ensure effective communication with Rural Deans and those responsible for the organisation of ministry within the Mission Areas.
- Attending Governing Body meetings whenever possible, with especial priority given to the annual meeting.
- Where circumstances require, the undertaking of additional functions on behalf of the Diocesan Warden.

With the Bishop's permission, to act as Bishop's Commissary for the licensing of a new Reader Ministry, for example, on a Reader moving parish.

9.5. In the event of a vacancy for an Area Warden, the Diocesan Warden shall, in liaison with the relevant Area Secretary, make such arrangements as considered appropriate to cover the Area Warden's functions, pending the appointment by the Bishop of a successor.

9.6. All Area Wardens shall be ex officio members of the Governing Body and entitled to attend and vote at Governing Body Meetings.

10. Area Secretaries

10.1. The Readers of each Area shall quinquennially elect an Area Secretary from their own number.

10.2. The Area Secretary shall normally represent the Area on the Governing Body and attend the annual residential meeting.

10.3. Each Area shall also nominate a deputy able to deputise when necessary for the Area Secretary on the Governing Body. The deputy shall be authorised to attend, participate in and vote at such Governing Body meetings.

10.4. The Area Secretary shall encourage good communication with Mission Areas and Rural Deans.

10.5. The Area Secretary as required shall make arrangements for the services of Readers.

10.6. Reader deployment within each Area shall be assisted by the Secretary in liaison with the respective Rural Deans.

10.7. The Secretary shall work with the Area Warden to ensure effective communication between the Area Readers, the Governing Body and the Diocesan Warden and Secretary General.

10.8. The Secretary shall be responsible for the arrangement of Area and Deanery meetings and for the Minutes of all such meetings, as appropriate.

10.9. When required, the Area Secretary shall be responsible for the invoicing of the appropriate parishes or groups for the travelling expenses of the Readers in the Area, when the Reader is engaged in parishes or groups other than their own.

11. Area Meetings

11.1. The number of Area Meetings shall be agreed by the Readers in each Area with a minimum requirement of two meetings per annum.

11.2. Readers are to be encouraged to hold joint Chapter Meetings with the Deanery clergy, at least once a year. These shall be in addition to the number of Area Meetings.

11.3. Area Meetings are intended to encourage fellowship among Readers and Readers continuing spiritual and ministerial education and formation.

11.4. The sharing of worship shall be included at all meetings.

11.5. The Diocesan Warden shall be invited to at least one Area Meeting in each Area annually.

11.6. It is the responsibility of the Area Warden and the Area Secretary to liaise in the formation of the annual Area programme.

11.7. Trainee Readers shall be invited to Area meetings.

12. Reader Practice

12.1. Most Readers in the Church of England are non-stipendiary ministers, but may claim authorised fees and expenses.

12.2. Readers are entitled to claim legitimate travelling and working expenses within their own parish. Legitimate travelling and working expenses in other parishes and groups are to be met by the parish or group concerned, at the rate set from time to time by the Diocese of Lincoln.

12.3. In the Diocese of Lincoln Readers are licensed to the Diocese, but are required to be accountable by and supported within a deanery, parish/group of parishes, chaplaincy or sector ministry.

12.4. A Reader is part of the ministerial team of the parish, group, deanery, chaplaincy or sector where they serve.

12.5. With the agreement of the presiding minister/parish priest, a Reader may be invited to work in other parishes/sectors in the Area or the Diocese.

12.6. The terms of reference for duties within a parish, group, sector or Area shall be the subject of a written but flexible Ministerial Agreement between each Reader and the Reader's incumbent or supervising minister in the case of an Area, Deanery, sector or chaplaincy. Ministerial Agreements shall be reviewed annually within the principle location of ministry and quinquennially within the Diocese. Copies of the annual local Review based on the local Ministerial Agreement, shall be sent to the Diocesan Warden in a form specified by the Diocesan Warden.

12.7. The annual local Review should be agreed and signed by both the incumbent (or supervising minister) and the Reader. In the case of an interregnum, the Rural Dean or the Rural Dean's nominee, shall take the place of the incumbent. Every five years there will be a Diocesan-wide review of each Reader's ministry, leading to the re-licensing of all Readers in the Diocese of Lincoln.

13. Readers' Licences

13.1. Under Bishops' Regulations Readers licences are awarded to those who have gained the Church of England Readers Certificate following an approved period of initial training and sponsorship by an incumbent and Parochial Church Council.

13.2. Licences will also be given to Readers received from other Dioceses welcomed by an incumbent (or other supervising minister) and PCC in the Lincoln Diocese, and commended to the Diocesan Warden by the Bishop, Warden or Secretary of the sending Diocese. The licence to minister is always awarded by the Diocesan Bishop.

13.3. Normally, licences shall be renewed every five years, following a quinquennial review to be undertaken by all Readers. The Diocesan Warden will commend the list for renewal to the Diocesan Bishop.

13.4. A Reader's licence shall expire upon the Reader's 70th birthday. Whilst the licence may not be renewed thereafter, the Bishop on the recommendation of the Diocesan Warden, may grant Permission to Officiate for up to a maximum of three years at a time. The submission to the Diocesan Warden of a duly completed and countersigned form by the supervising minister shall be required.

13.5. On retirement from all or most ministerial duties, a Reader may be appointed Reader Emeritus by the Bishop. The Diocesan Warden must be informed of all such retirements to facilitate the appointment process.

13.6. Readers with Permission to Officiate and Readers Emeritus will continue to receive the Reader Magazine, circulations and communications from the Governing Body and Officers. Membership of an Area Reader fellowship will continue.

14. Deployment of Readers Outside their Parishes

14.1. Application for the services of Readers outside their own parish or group shall be made to the appropriate Area Secretary by Rural Deans, incumbents or churchwardens.

14.2 In the case of a benefice becoming vacant, the Rural Dean should make early arrangements with the Area Secretary for Reader's services.

14.3 Rural Deans, Area Wardens and Area Secretaries are encouraged to develop strategies for the deployment of Readers within each Deanery.

14.4 Guidelines from the Diocesan Warden are available for more permanent re-deployment or secondment of Readers to new parishes or groups.

14.5 In all instances of re-deployment and secondment, an objective of the Reader shall be to help in the development of lay ministry within the congregation of the parish to which the Reader is assigned.

15. Readers' Travelling Expenses

15.1. Readers are entitled to claim reasonable expenses of office from their PCCs at the current Diocesan rate.

15.2 In the case of duty given to other parishes and groups, as required, Area Secretaries shall invoice the PCC treasurer of the parish concerned.

15.3. When Service is provided during an interregnum the Area Secretary will liaise with the Rural Dean to arrange settlement by the Lincoln Diocesan Trust and Board of Finance Limited.

16. Acceptance of Candidates for Training as Readers

Candidates must be nominated by the incumbent and PCC of the parish or group where they normally worship and are on the electoral roll. The procedures for discernment, nomination and selection are overseen by the Diocesan Director of Ordinands/Vocations Adviser.

17. Training of Candidates for the Office of Reader

17.1. This shall be undertaken by the Lincoln School of Theology

17.2. On successful completion of the course the candidate, subject to the Bishop's assent, shall be admitted and licensed at the next Annual Service or other appropriate occasion.

18. Annual Service and General Meeting

18.1. A service for all Readers in the Diocese shall be held annually during which candidates shall be admitted and licensed.

18.2. Every five years, the Annual Service shall include the renewal of Readers' licences generally.

18.3. An Annual General Meeting shall be held at which any item agreed by the Governing Body or of which the Secretary General has received 14 days notice shall be discussed.

18.4. All Readers are expected to attend both the Annual Service and the Annual General Meeting each year unless there are exceptional circumstances.

19. Official Dress of Readers

In the conduct of public worship Readers shall normally wear black cassock, surplice, Reader's plain blue scarf without adornment, hood of their degree (if any), or where local custom requires, Readers may wear an alb with plain blue scarf without adornment.

20. Changes of Address

Any Readers changing their address, whether or not moving out of the Diocese, shall notify the Secretary General, the Diocesan Warden and their Area Secretary, so that address lists be correctly maintained.

21. Alterations to the Constitution

21.1. Alterations to the Constitution may only be made on the recommendation of the Governing Body and agreed at an Annual General Meeting.

21.2. The Constitution and any changes within the Constitution shall be acceptable to the Diocesan Bishop.

22. Area Re-structuring

22.1. Any proposals for Area re-structuring must be referred to the Diocesan Bishop who has the right to direct how Areas shall be restructured after consultation with the Bishop of Grimsby or Grantham as appropriate.

22.2. The approval of the Annual General Meeting must be obtained before any recommendation for Area re-structuring may be made to the Bishop of Grimsby or Grantham on behalf of Lincoln Readers.

22.3. Following re-structuring, the Bishop would re-appoint Area Wardens as necessary. Area Secretaries and other representative Reader officers would be re-elected as necessary.

Appendix A

Terms of Office

Terms of Office shall be as set out below:

Elections

Elections shall normally be held at the ordinary meeting of the relevant electorate immediately preceding expiry of the term of office of the current office holder. In all instances (including casual vacancies) such elections shall take place no later than the normal meeting of the relevant electorate immediately following the expiration of the previous office holder's term.

A person elected to fill a casual vacancy shall complete the term of office of the predecessor. For the purposes of the limitation of the number of successive terms of office for which an individual may hold a post, the election to fill a casual vacancy shall count as a term if, at the time of election to the casual vacancy, more than half the normal term of office remains to be served.

Area Secretaries

Area Secretaries shall be elected for a period of five years in the first instance. Normally, no Area Secretary shall serve more than two consecutive terms of office. The Area Secretary shall be elected at a normal meeting of the Area Readers.

Area Wardens

Area Wardens shall be appointed for a period of five years in the first instance and shall not usually serve more than two successive terms of office. Area Wardens are ex officio members of the Governing Body.

Secretary General

Any Reader in the Diocese is eligible for the office of Secretary General. The Secretary General may serve a maximum of two successive terms of office of five years per term. Procedure for election will include each candidate being proposed and seconded by a Licensed Reader. If there is to be an election, election papers will then be sent to every licensed Reader and will include a pen picture of each candidate for office. The election shall be by postal ballot with a three week interval required between the sending out of the papers and the receiving of the votes. The Diocesan Warden of Readers shall act as Returning Officer for this election.

The person elected shall be nominated to the Diocesan Bishop for conferment in office.

Chair of the Governing Body

The Chair of the Governing Body shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting for a term of office of five years.

Appendix B

The Seven Areas

Grantham: Bourne, Stamford and Beltisloe, Grantham, Lafford and Loveden Deaneries

Elloe: Elloe East and Elloe West Deaneries

Holland: Holland East and Holland West Deaneries

Lincoln: Christianity and Graffoe Deaneries

Bolingbroke, Horncastle and Louth: Bolingbroke, Calcewaithe and Candleshoe, Horncastle, Louthesk and West Wold Deaneries

Grimsby: Grimsby and Cleethorpes and Haverstoe Deaneries

Scunthorpe and West Lindsey: Isle of Axholme, Manlake, Yarborough, Corringham and Lawres Deaneries.