

The Agreed Statement

Introduction

The Agreed Statement is a core document because it forms the essential basis for the commissioning of a Shared Ministry Team. The Statement is formally signed by the Archdeacon who commissions the Team, the incumbent of the parish, each member of the Shared Ministry Team, a representative of the PCC and, lastly, by a representative of the Diocesan Group for Shared Ministry (DGSM) responsible for overseeing training and support of Shared Ministry Teams across the Diocese.

The Agreed Statement is a covenant, a pledge of commitment which the team makes to each other and to the church as represented by the PCC and to the diocese as represented by the Group for Shared Ministry. This paper provides guidance on the various elements that make up an Agreed Statement.

A. The Shared Ministry Team and the PCC

The Agreed Statement will make reference to some key commitments which the PCC must accept before selection and training can commence and which will determine a good working relationship between the SMT and the PCC. The key issues are discussed at the initial meeting with the Bishop's Officer for Shared Ministry (BOSM) and revisited towards the end of training at an Agreed Statement meeting chaired by the BOSM.

Before selection of the SMT can commence:

- The PCC must decide and record their decision to establish a Shared Ministry Team
- The PCC must confirm in that PCC minute that they agree to follow diocesan guidelines on matters of policy with regard to selection, training and on-going support of the team once commissioned

At the commissioning of the team by the Archdeacon the PCC and the team will reaffirm their understanding and agreement to the following:

- The SMT must understand that the Team is accountable to the PCC and exercises its ministry under the authority of the PCC.
- The PCC agree to support the team for the commissioned period of five years

- The SMT agree to an annual review. The first part of this Review is usually facilitated by the Team trainer(s) and reflects on the spiritual life and working together of the Team, the performance of their ministry tasks in the past year and the Team's ministry tasks for the coming year. The second part of the Review is a discussion and agreement with the PCC with particular emphasis on agreeing the proposed ministry tasks.
- The PCC agree to have regular agenda items so they may hear of the teams activities, discuss progress and the need for any resources

B. The Life of the Shared Ministry team

A section of the Agreed Statement addresses the covenant which the Team members have made with each other to enable the life of the team to flourish. This will include:

- A note that the Team has agreed in its training the values and commitments which make for good relationships and effective team working.
- A commitment by the team to make the life of the team and attendance at meetings a priority. This will include some indication of the regularity of team meetings
- The plans to maintain and develop the spiritual life of the team including a commitment to prayer and worship
- The intent to work under the authority of and be accountable to the PCC in all that the Team undertakes

C. The ministry tasks of the Team

As a part of the overall training, the task of the trainer/ facilitators will be to work to assist the team in the discernment of their possible ministry tasks, appropriate to the individual parish situation and team membership. These are then negotiated locally with the PCC at an Agreed Statement meeting.

- Broad outlines of their ministry tasks over the five year period of commissioning
- More specific agreement of their ministry tasks for the year ahead
- Plans involving communication with the congregation and outreach to the community, including any resource implications, should be agreed with the PCC

The Agreed Statement Meeting

Prior to commissioning there will be a formal meeting between the PCC and the SMT which will finalise the Agreed Statement which will then be signed and ratified by all parties listed above

at the Commissioning Service. The following is a brief indication of the key elements of this important meeting.

1. Ensure that all PCC and SMT members are aware of the basis of the Agreed statement, as outlined in section A above, on which basis the Bishop will permit the commissioning of the team to take place
2. Allow time for any questions and discussion around the items in point 1
3. The task of the meeting then centres on the final section C on page one of the template for an Agreed Statement:
 - i. The team is invited to share their ideas for their ministry tasks in general for the five years
 - ii. The team identifies those more specific objectives which will be the focus of their work in the first year of commissioning
 - iii. These suggestions are then discussed with the PCC in order to agree tasks and priorities and to address any resource implications and other issues that may be relevant
4. The SMT will agree with the PCC any refinements to the draft Statement prepared by the SMT in order to produce a final Agreed Statement which will be read out at the commissioning service.
5. Finally, a copy of the Agreed Statement is sent by email to the following:
 - i. to the team trainers
 - ii. to Wendy Pooley at St James' House
 - iii. to the officer for Shared Ministry

Working together

Clearly, members of the PCC may have additional suggestions but on the whole it is hoped that the PCC will work at least initially within the parameters of what the team feels able to offer.

The critical issue is that Team is not seen as or effectively become merely a subcommittee of the PCC dealing with, say, the requirements of the deanery mission plan but is allowed to develop its own grass roots ideas. There may well however be opportunities where objectives overlap.

Teams and an Ordained Local Minister

A number of Shared Ministry Teams will include an Ordained Local Minister (OLM) as part of the Team. Please note that a Shared Ministry Team is the recognised context in which an OLM exercises a locally based and collaborative ministry. The SMT should not be understood to function in any primary sense as a support group for an OLM. Of course the Team in practice will offer support and encouragement, not only to the OLM but to each other, but pastoral support for the OLM is not a primary task to be identified in the Agreed Statement.

Contacts

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