



DIOCESE OF  
**Bath & Wells**

Living and telling the story of Jesus



# Making an appointment

A guide for benefices

April 2026

## Introduction

Making an appointment is a key moment in the life of a benefice. Time will have been taken in reflecting on future vision and the qualities needed in the person to lead the church in its next season.

This booklet sets out the logistics around advertising, shortlisting, interviewing and everything leading up to the licensing service.

It is a process that brings together the parish, the Bishop and the patrons too if any parishes in the benefice have patrons. There are many practical things to be done, but all of these in a spiritual context of discerning God's will through prayer.

### Applications, Shortlisting and Interviewing

Dates for an advertisement, closing date, shortlisting meeting and interviews will be agreed. These dates are the patron's prerogative and are usually arranged by the Archdeacon. The Archdeaconry Assistant will communicate these dates to all parties involved. The PCC will need to arrange, book and cover the costs of venues. Travel and also advertisement costs also fall to the PCC(s). Applications are received by the Archdeacon's office on the patron's behalf, and then sent to the members of the interview panel prior to the shortlisting meeting. All information about candidates should be held by the panel members in strictest confidence. The Bishop or Archdeacon will chair the shortlisting meeting and will also use the meeting to help the panel plan the interview questions and format of the day. After shortlisting, the Archdeacon's office will follow up on references for shortlisted candidates.

The Archdeacon will inform any candidates not shortlisted, and will invite those who have been to interview. The benefice will finalise arrangements for the benefice visit and orientation day and the location for interviews. They will usually have a tour of the parsonage house, the church(es) and key parts of the parish(es). They will be asked to lead a Bible Study with a small group of parishioners and, if possible, will visit a local school and interact with pupils and staff.

Tours are to be conducted by a trusted person not on the panel, who again will need to regard names and details of candidates as confidential. Overnight accommodation may be required by some of the candidates – this should not be with parishioners but somewhere near such as a local B&B or pub. The benefice will inform the Archdeaconry Assistant of the visit and orientation day arrangements and interview location. The Archdeaconry Assistant will send a detailed timetable to the candidates and the interview panel .

The interviews will be conducted according to good practice and equal opportunities guidelines. At the end of the interview process, the Archdeacon will collect in all paperwork and arrange for secure filing or shredding, and panel members will be requested to delete any details about candidates from their computers. The Bishop or Archdeacon will inform the candidates of the outcome of the interview. The appointment of a candidate will be subject to a satisfactory DBS check.

### **What happens when the right person has been identified?**

Once the offer has been accepted the Archdeacon will liaise with the new postholder and the Archdeacon's office will circulate an announcement to be read out in the respective churches. It is important that the appointment remains confidential until an agreed formal announcement is made where the person is coming to and where they are leaving on the same day.

Dates for a licensing service will be arranged to suit the new postholder (who will normally need to give three months' notice including a month to move house), the parish(es), the licensing Bishop and the Archdeacon.

The Area Dean will guide Churchwardens in organising the Institution and Induction service and will organise a rehearsal. Service templates are available from the Archdeaconry Assistant.

# Preparation notes for licensings

## Invitations

A suggested template invitation:

The Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councils of  
request the pleasure of your company  
at  
the Celebration for a New Ministry  
of  
.....  
as  
.....  
by ..... Bishop of .....  
and ..... Archdeacon of .....  
at ..... Church .....  
on ..... at 7.00 pm  
and afterwards for refreshments in .....(eg the Church Hall)  
RSVP to.....by.....  
Robing (Choir Dress) for Clergy/Readers to take place in .....

Invitations can be sent by email or printed. It is customary to invite the following:

- Those on the Parish Priest Designate's list, i.e. family and friends, past parishioners, etc.
- Clergy and Readers of the Deanery
- Other Clergy and Readers who have helped during the vacancy
- Ecumenical partners.

Community guests including those who will be giving greetings, for example; the Mayor (where appropriate) the Chairman of the Parish Council, Headteacher etc. Churches are encouraged to invite people from across the community as this is a mission opportunity.

Patrons may be sent a copy of the invitation so that they are aware of the practical arrangements but it should be made clear that it is 'for information only'.

Patrons will attend to present the candidate and should be fully aware of arrangements made.

## The service

### Service booklet

A template Order of Service is available from the Archdeacon's office.

- Although it is a standard diocesan Order of Service, it can be adapted to local circumstances and your Area Dean will be happy to advise in the first instance.
- The new priest designate chooses four hymns and one reading.
- During the final hymn, an offering will be taken for the benefice.
- The new priest should give a brief introduction about themselves for the service booklet including a photo.
- Churchwardens will need to send a draft order of service to the Archdeacon before it is printed.
- A copy of the finalised order of service should be sent to the Bishop.
- Printing is arranged by the benefice.
- You must be mindful of copyright laws before reproducing hymns in the service sheet. More information about copyright laws can be found on the CCLI website [ccli.com/uk/en](http://ccli.com/uk/en)

### Rehearsal of the service

The rehearsal is the responsibility of the Area Dean and should be arranged in consultation with them.

The rehearsal should be attended by the Parish Priest Designate, all the Wardens, the Verger if there is one, the Crucifer if there is one and similarly Acolytes, the Organist and others taking part in the Service, though not the Bishop, Patron and Archdeacon. At the rehearsal, the detailed movements of the service will be gone through.

The parish will need to provide oil for the anointing of the new incumbent, if required.

A Bible for the oaths should be placed at a convenient place near the chancel step.

The new priest is responsible for the brief notices (to include details about refreshments) and prayers.

## Seating

Front pews should be reserved for the Parish Priest Designate's family. A front pew should have reserved places for the Patron(s), or their representative. Plenty of space for visiting Clergy and readers should also be reserved.

The following additional seats are also required:

- a. One at the Chancel step for the Bishop
- b. Three in the Sanctuary on the south side for the Archdeacon, Area Dean and Lay Dean
- c. Two in the Sanctuary on the north side for the Bishop and his Chaplain.

One for the new Parish Priest in the place where he/she normally conducts the Service (unless there is a proper stall).

## Robing

Churchwardens should ensure a separate space is available for the Bishop's procession (Bishop, Archdeacon, Area Dean, Lay Dean, new Incumbent, and Bishop's Chaplain). There should be a place for visiting clergy and Readers to robe. Robing will usually be choir dress.

## Service Register

The Area Dean is asked to ensure that the Register is written up beforehand, [using a new page](#). The Bishop, Archdeacon, Area Dean, Lay Dean, Wardens and the new Incumbent are to sign.

## Order of procession

The choir, servers, Readers and Clergy should arrive in procession at the principal door of the church a few minutes before the Service starts.

The Churchwardens, Lay Dean, Area Dean, Archdeacon, Bishop and his/her Chaplain arrive at the principal door for the Service to begin. They may be led by a Verger and join with the rest of the procession.

The Patron and Parish Priest Designate together with a previous colleague or parish representative remain outside the main door of the church until they are welcomed in and taken in procession for the Presentation.

The Bishop's procession enters to the opening verses of the first hymn. The Churchwardens lead the Bishop to the chair at the Chancel step. They should move outwards and stand behind the Area Dean and Archdeacon.

**Procession in**      1.Cross 2.Visiting Readers (deanery + priest's guests)  
3.Benefice/Parish Readers 4.Benefice Clergy 5.Area  
Dean and Lay Dean 6.Archdeacon 7.Churchwardens  
8.Bishop 9.Bishop's Chaplain

**Procession out**    1.Cross 2.Churchwardens 3.Bishop and new incumbent  
4.Bishop's Chaplain 5.Archdeacon 6.Area Dean and Lay  
Dean 7.Parish Clergy 8.Parish Readers 9.Visiting Clergy  
10.Visiting Readers

## Parking

Parking spaces for the Bishop, Patron, Archdeacon, Area Dean and Lay Dean should be provided and clearly indicated. Arrange additional parking where necessary and have Parking Stewards where appropriate. Consider notifying the Police if the extra traffic/parking could cause problems.

