

Job Description

Pastoral and Legal Support Officer

Background

The Parish Support Team is made up of the staff and volunteers of a charity called the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd (NDBF). The core purpose of the charity is to serve the local parish mission and ministry of Church of England churches, schools and chaplaincies across Norfolk and Waveney, collectively referred to as the Diocese of Norwich.

The Parish Support Team operates from Diocesan House in Easton on the outskirts of Norwich, offering a broad range of services across the diocese that support and encourage colleagues working in local parishes. The main areas of work include direct support for local mission and ministry; and indirect support including areas such as finance, GDPR and data, communications, and safeguarding services.

One of the areas supported is in pastoral reorganisation. The basic framework of the ministry and mission in the Church of England comprises parishes (units of administration), benefices (units of ministry) and deaneries (geographical areas). These provide the structural and organisational framework of how the Diocese operates. Some of these structures and groupings are historical and so need to be reviewed from time to time to enable the local church to be more effective in mission and ministry whilst balancing needs and available resources.

Parishes can be joined together or reconfigured in many ways, and boundaries can be redrawn. This is done through a legal process known as pastoral reorganisation under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011. Reorganisation includes consultation with the PCC, deanery, archdeaconry and patrons. Following such consultation a Pastoral Scheme may be drawn up (or a Pastoral Order for minor matters) for approval by the Church Commissioners.

The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) which forms part of the Bishop's Council of Trustees is the committee that governs this activity. It has a strategic role in developing changing patterns of ministry and overseeing organisational change to support the work of the Church of England as it seeks to further God's mission serving the people and communities across the Diocese of Norwich.

The Pastoral Legal Support Officer undertakes the planning and administration of this process and supports effective decision making by the DMPC.

Ethos and Values

The way we work in the Parish Support Team is as important as what we do, and we are committed to:

- Proactively promote and demonstrate our Diocesan Vision, Christian ethos and values in all aspects of work.
- Treat everyone as a valued individual with kindness and respect.
- Promote and demonstrate a culture of continuous improvement and development.
- Work collaboratively with all colleagues in the Parish Support Team.

Purpose of the role

To ensure effective planning, administration and governance of mission and pastoral matters in the Diocese.

Key working relationships

Line manager	Church Care and Development Manager
Positions managed	None
Internal	Parish Support Team Colleagues Bishops of Norwich, Lynn & Thetford and their PAs Archdeacons of Norwich, Norfolk and Lynn Designated Officer (for patronage matters)
External	Diocesan Registrar and Diocesan Registry Clerk, Clergy and laity of the Diocese

Main duties and responsibilities

- Preparing bi-monthly reports for presentation, following consultation with the Archdeacons and /or Bishops, to the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) on the status of new schemes, updates on those already underway and advise on benefices with Suspension of Presentation. To advise and inform DMPC in its consideration of schemes, pastoral change, bishop's mission orders etc. and follow up their decisions
- To draft and deliver proposals for pastoral reorganisation in a timely manner following discussion with Archdeacons. To circulate documents and advise parochial clergy, PCCs and other interested parties in connection with pastoral reorganisation, including taking part in consultations if required, track and provide updates on progress of proposals and obtain relevant consents where required.
- To understand and follow the formal procedures laid down in the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 and Code of Practice and effectively liaise with the Church Commissioners' Pastoral Division to draft and progress Pastoral Schemes and Orders.
- To provide general advice as required to interested parties in connection with pastoral reorganisation such as Pastoral Schemes, Bishops' Pastoral Orders, or Joint Council Schemes, including taking part in consultations and delivering workshops as required.
- To oversee the legal work required for closing churches including pastoral Schemes for church buildings to be closed for regular public worship and to enable sale or alternative use.
- To maintain core records of pastoral reorganisation and patronage information in the Diocese, be able to effectively research the background of pastoral schemes and transitions through online indexes and physical resources held at the Diocesan Registry or Norfolk Records Office and update the diocesan database appropriately, in liaison with the Registry Clerk where required, so as to be the diocesan entrusted resource and adviser on understanding the complex history of a parish.
- To maintain records of suspended benefices in the Diocese and to ensure the relevant formal consultation procedures as set out in The Patronage Measure 1986 are followed in relation to new suspensions and renewals.

- To respond to enquiries about the interpretation of the current legislation including The Church Representation Rules, The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 and The Patronage Measure 1986, The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015, the Charities Act 2022 and keep up to date with new legislation where applicable.
- To liaise with the Property Team where pastoral schemes determine ownership or use of property.
- To understand the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015 and related ecclesiastical law in order to advise on any aspect that impacts the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 and to advise colleagues on processes and procedures.
- To liaise with the Diocesan Registrar, or Registry Clerk, where needed on legal issues, matters relating to assets, process and policy.
- Draft the annual reports of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee.
- Secretariat support to the Diocese Board of Patronage in the operation of its activities, attending meetings, taking minutes, preparing Agendas and providing reports as required.
- Be flexible regarding working hours in order to attend occasional meetings or external training sessions outside core working hours. Undertake such other reasonable duties as may be required from time to time as are consistent with the responsibilities of the grade to support the wider Church Care and Development Team.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and Experience		
Experience of handling strictly confidential information	X	
Experience of legal and regulatory work (ideally in the Church of England)	X	
Educated to degree level or higher education		X
Experience of the Mission and Pastoral Measure and working with the Church Commissioners		X
Knowledge and Skills		
Strong IT skills, competent use of Microsoft Word, Outlook, PowerPoint and Excel programmes	X	
Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to deal with people at all levels	X	
Good communication skills, both written and verbal, with experience of communicating effectively with a range of stakeholders	X	
Project management skills, with the ability to see through projects from inception to benefits realisation, and the experience of having done so	X	
Ability to provide creative solutions to problems and overcome barriers	X	
Ability to successfully influence a range of stakeholders to create a sense of common purpose and advocacy	X	

	Essential	Desirable
Attention to detail, accuracy and thoroughness in all aspects of the work	X	
Experienced administrative and organisational skills with a strategic approach to record keeping	X	
Knowledge of the Church of England, its structures and processes		X
Personable Attributes		
Effective and sensitive communicator with people at all levels and roles both in writing and at meetings, with a willingness to listen and ability to tailor information to the audience to create shared understanding.	X	
Able to work under pressure to meet targets and deadlines	X	
Calm and professional disposition with the ability to adapt to individual differences and perspectives in culture, style and viewpoint	X	
Self-motivated and enthusiastic, actively seek input from others and share own ideas to create best outcome.	X	
Able to respond effectively to changing priorities and ability to problem solve	X	
Able to manage a high-volume workload, manage processes and workflow and assimilate information from various sources.	X	
Able to work effectively without supervision running several processes concurrently.	X	
Willing to accept responsibility and make sound, timely decisions to provide effective service delivery.	X	
Logical and systematic in work processes	X	
Ability to build and use connections with colleagues and communities both within and outside the PST	X	
Supportive and sympathetic understanding of the aims and purpose of the Church of England and empathy with the Mission of the Diocese of Norwich in order to represent the organisation in an honest, ethical and professional way.	X	
Availability		
The role involves attendance at meetings and events at a range of venues around the county, some on weekends, early mornings or late evenings, as well as the ability to be away from the Diocese on residential activities. Notice will be given of these and time off in lieu is available.	X	
Current driving licence and have a car available for travel throughout Norfolk	X	

Summary of Terms and Conditions

Role	Pastoral and Legal Support Officer
Responsible to	Church Care and Development Manager
Hours	14 hours per week with some flexibility in hours worked between weeks to match variations in workload.
Pension	Enrolment in the NDBF defined contribution scheme a contributory scheme with an 5% contribution by NDBF and 3% by the employee, plus in-service life cover.
Annual Leave	Pro rata of 25 days plus 8 public holidays, plus fixed days between Christmas and New Year. Pro rata of 3 additional days after completion of 5 years' service.
Term	Permanent. Probationary period will be 6 months.
Notice Period for both employee and employer	1 month notice during probation period, 2 months afterwards
Expenses	Working expenses are paid at the Diocesan rates
Base	Diocesan House, 109 Dereham Road, Easton, Norwich, NR9 5ES You may also be required to work at other locations within the Diocese of Norwich in line with the requirements of your role. Hybrid Working may be considered (up to one day potentially undertaken from home each week).
Contract	The contract of employment will be with the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance (NDBF)
Status	The successful applicant will need to show proof of right to work in the UK and a basic DBS check before taking up the post.

This job description is not an exhaustive document but is a reflection of the duties and responsibilities applicable at the time of issue. Details and emphasis are subject to amendment and revision in the light of the changing needs of the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd.