

GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNANCE OF MISSION AREAS  
INCLUDING CONDUCTING MISSION AREA ANNUAL VESTRY MEETINGS

1. This guidance is provided for Mission Area Conference members, and any other parties interested in the governance of the Mission Area. It is based on the requirements for both Parochial Church Councils and Deanery Conferences, as set out by the Constitution of the Church in Wales. Where there is some discrepancy between the rules for Parochial Church Councils and Deanery Conferences, the most stringent rules have been applied so as not to breach the requirements of the Constitution of the Church in Wales.
2. The Mission Area shall arrange for a Vestry Meeting to be held every year. The Annual Vestry Meeting must be held no later than 30th April in each year, and such meeting shall be open to the following persons:
  - i) Mission Area Leader, and all lay and ordained clergy with the Bishop's Licence, Bishop's Commission or other Permission to Officiate;
  - ii) Full time stipendiary Lay Workers within the Mission Area;
  - iii) Any qualified electors within the Mission Area;
  - iv) With the approval of the Mission Area Conference, any resident within the Mission Area who is a communicant, although these persons do not have a vote; and
  - v) Any other person at the Mission Area Leader's discretion, although these persons will not have the right to speak or vote.
3. If there is any dispute as to a person's right to attend, speak at or cast a vote at the Mission Area Vestry Meeting, the Mission Area Leader's ruling shall be conclusive. There is a right of appeal to the Archdeacon, however.
4. Each church within the Mission Area may hold a congregational meeting before the Annual Vestry Meeting of the Mission Area to elect members of the church committee, the church committee being responsible to the Mission Area Conference. At the congregational meeting, the congregation shall also nominate a Mission Area Conference representative and a substitute (the number of representatives for each church to be confirmed by the Mission Area to ensure adequate and equal representation from each church whilst ensuring the total does not exceed 25 elected members of the Mission Area Conference), sub-wardens (one nominated by the church committee and one nominated by the priest with special responsibility for the church), sidespersons, a representative to the Diocesan Conference, and any other position recommended by the Mission Area Conference for ratification at the Mission Area Annual Vestry Meeting. The sub-wardens elected for each church, and the Mission Area Conference representative shall be ex-officio members of the church committee.
5. The Annual Vestry Meeting of the Mission Area shall carry out the following business:
  - i) receiving and discussing the consolidated accounts and reports for the previous year. In the first year of the Mission Area, the congregational meetings of the individual churches shall receive and approve the accounts for the last year of the former Parochial Church Council, and confirm at the Mission Area Annual Vestry Meeting that this has

been done. In subsequent years, congregational meetings of the individual churches shall review and ratify the part of the Mission Area accounts that relate to their church and confirm to the Mission Area Annual Vestry Meeting that they are true and accurate;

- ii) receiving and discussing the reports from the Diocesan Conference;
- iii) receiving and discussing any other reports requested by the Mission Area Conference; and
- iv) discussing any other business of which adequate notice is given to the Mission Area Conference.

The primary business of the Mission Area is to promote the love and knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ within the Mission Area. Where possible, the reports and business of the Mission Area Annual Vestry Meeting should reflect or enhance this primary aim.

6. The Annual Vestry Meeting shall hold elections for positions within the Mission Area, in the order set out herein:
  - i) Mission Area Churchwardens - one to be elected by the Vestry Meeting, and another to be appointed by the Mission Area Leader (following discussions with the Shared Ministry Team);
  - ii) Sub-wardens for each church within the Mission Area, based on the nominations made by the individual church congregational meetings;
  - iii) Members of the Mission Area Conference;
  - iv) Sidespersons for each church within the Mission Area, based on the nominations made by the individual church congregational meetings; and
  - v) Representatives to the Diocesan Conference for each church, based on the nominations made by the individual church congregational meetings, bearing in mind that no cleric shall be entitled to vote on the appointment of lay representatives to the Diocesan Conference.
7. All persons nominated to or for any of the elected roles within the Mission Area as set out above shall have consented to their nomination before being put forward for election.
8. The Mission Area Vestry Meeting shall appoint an independent examiner or auditor (as the Charities Act 2011 requires, depending on the income of the Mission Area) to review the consolidated accounts of the Mission Area. The independent examiner or auditor shall NOT be a member of the Mission Area Conference. Please visit the Charity Commission website ([www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission)) for further details if required.
9. Further Vestry Meetings can be called at any time during the year, an Extraordinary Vestry Meeting must be called if requested in writing by at least one quarter or thirty (whichever is the lowest) qualified electors within the Mission Area.
10. Each Mission Area must have an Electoral Roll, and it is recommended (but not required) that each Mission Area Conference appoints a dedicated Electoral Roll Officer. It is also recommended (but not required) that the responsibility for preparing an Electoral Roll for each

church within the Mission Area is delegated to each church committee, such information then fed up to the Mission Area Conference (or Mission Area Electoral Roll Officer) so that the information can be properly collated. The Mission Area Electoral Roll will be sub-divided by church, and each church committee may hold a copy of the Electoral Roll for their particular church.

11. The rules relating to Mission Area Electoral Rolls (entry, removal, renewal and replacement) are as currently exercised by each church.
12. Mission Area Conference membership falls into three categories: ex-officio members; elected members; and co-opted members.
  - i) Ex-officio membership of the Mission Area Conference is made up of the Mission Area Leader and all other clergy (unless agreed otherwise by the Mission Area Conference and the potential ex-officio members), any full-time stipendiary Lay Workers, and Mission Area Wardens;
  - ii) Elected membership is made up of such numbers of lay qualified electors from each church within the Mission Area (not exceeding twenty-five in total), as elected at the Annual Vestry Meeting. The number of elected members shall be fixed by and at the Annual Vestry Meeting. A supplemental list of elected members can also be prepared so that, if an elected member for any church cannot or will not attend Mission Area Conference meetings, the next person on the supplemental list representing that church may attend instead. The supplemental list can also be used in the event of any casual vacancies; and
  - iii) Co-opted membership (not exceeding seven in number) can be made up of the secretary and/or treasurer (if they are not already ex-officio or elected members), or chosen from the lay persons or clerics (other than retired clerics), licensed readers, or licensed lay workers.
13. The number of clerical members of the Mission Area Conference shall not exceed the number of lay members, and the number of co-opted members cannot exceed the number of elected members.
14. Unless they are already members of the Mission Area Conference, any Mission Area representatives on Diocesan Boards, or members of the Governing Body and/or the Representative Body living in the Mission Area may, at the invitation of the Mission Area Leader, attend and speak at Mission Area Conference meetings, but these persons will not have a vote.
15. All members of the Mission Area Conference must be communicants over 18 years old, and they must sign a declaration of their willingness and eligibility to be members of the Mission Area Conference.
16. The Mission Area Conference must appoint a secretary, and a treasurer. If it wishes, the Mission Area Conference may also appoint a deputy secretary and/or a deputy treasurer. The Mission Area Conference Secretary shall also act as the Secretary for the Mission Area Annual Vestry Meeting. It is also recommended (but not constitutionally required) that the Mission Area Conference should appoint a Lay co-Chair, a Mission Area Administrator, a Mission Area Gift Aid Secretary, and a Mission Area Safeguarding Officer. It will become a legal requirement for

the Mission Area Conference to appoint a Mission Area Information Officer, but further details of this requirement will be made available when necessary.

17. The Mission Area Conference must meet at least four times a year, and it is the duty of the Shared Ministry Team and the Mission Area Conference to consult together and co-operate in all matters of concern and importance to the Mission Area.
18. The Mission Area Conference should take into consideration any expression of opinion by properly constituted church meetings. To this end, the Mission Area Conference will have the right and ability to appoint an Executive Committee and any sub-committees it deems necessary, including (but not limited to) a finance sub-committee, a buildings and property sub-committee, and the individual church committees. Membership of such committees shall include some members of the Mission Area Conference, and the Mission Area Conference shall make such standing orders (or rules and regulations) governing the powers and procedures of the sub-committees, including to powers to co-opt additional members, as it deems appropriate, provided that all acts of the sub-committees (unless pre-authorised by the standing orders) are ratified by the Mission Area Conference. The Mission Area Conference will have the power to amend the standing orders of the sub-committees, or to abolish any sub-committee, if any such sub-committee acts beyond its powers.
19. It is encouraged that the Lay Co-Chair shall preside at the Mission Area Conference meetings, but it is a constitutional requirement that the Mission Area Leader or Lay Co-Chair or Vice-Chair must preside over the Mission Area Conference meetings, and the presiding officer will have a casting vote in the event of a tied vote. If the Mission Area Leader, the Lay Co-Chair, and the Vice-Chair are unable to attend a meeting, the Mission Area Conference must appoint a chair from among the members present. The temporary chair will have a casting vote whilst they are presiding over the meetings in the event of a tied vote.
20. The proceedings of the Mission Area Conference will not be invalidated if any meeting does not have valid representation from each church within the Mission Area.
21. The Mission Area Conference is constitutionally responsible for the promotion of the whole mission of the Church in the Mission Area - pastoral; evangelistic; social; and ecumenical.
22. The Mission Area Conference is constitutionally responsible for assessing the needs of the Mission Area in respect of finance, personnel and buildings, and is also responsible for the strategic planning for worship and pastoral care within the Mission Area. The Mission Area Conference is also constitutionally responsible for managing and raising Mission Area finances. Within the standing orders (rules and regulations) of the church committees, the Mission Area Conference may delegate specific powers relating to finances to individual church committees, but the Mission Area Conference retains overall responsibility.
23. The Mission Area Conference is constitutionally responsible for the preparation of a Mission Area budget which, unless specifically delegated, shall include church expenses, church contributions to the Diocesan Share as well as home and overseas mission, and the Mission Area Conference is also responsible for the arrangements for raising the money needed by the Mission Area to undertake all it wants to achieve.

24. The Mission Area Conference is constitutionally responsible for the production of Mission Area annual report and accounts, and will also be responsible for the annual review of clergy expenses.
25. The Mission Area Conference is constitutionally responsible for discharging its constitutional duties, for implementing any provisions of the Governing Body and/or the Diocesan Conference, to advise on all matters properly referred to it, and to consider and discuss matters of religious and public interest to the Church in Wales and the wider community (but not to formulate or declare doctrine).
26. Other than the items that it is constitutionally responsible for, and subject to any decisions of the Governing Body and/or the Diocesan Conference, the Mission Area Conference shall manage its own affairs, and shall formulate its own rules and regulations.