



Reader Ministry Handbook



“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”

(WORDS OF JESUS FROM JOHN 10:10)

The first “Lay Reader” in the Church of England

‘It may be remembered that on Ascension-day last it was agreed at a meeting of Archbishops and bishops held at Lambeth Palace, to sanction the establishment of a new semi-clerical order in the Church of England, to be called “lay readers”, who may, under certain restrictions, officiate in church (not administering Eucharist, of course), wearing a surplice, and may visit and read to the poor. To the Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol belongs, it would seem, the credit of being the first act upon resolution of the episcopate. Mr J. D. T. Niblett has been solemnly set aside by Bishop Ellicott, after a special service in the palace, as a lay reader for the parish of Standish, Gloucestershire. As a sign of his new office, the Bishop gave a New Testament into the hands of the Reader.’

from the ‘Record’, July 10th 1866.

Using this handbook

This handbook is designed to meet the needs of anyone connected to Reader ministry in the Diocese of Gloucester. It should therefore be relevant for:

- Readers and prospective Readers
- Incumbents
- Churchwardens and other PCC members
- Members of the Reader Council
- Deanery Sub-Wardens
- Deanery Representative Readers
- Director of Studies for Readers
- All those involved in Reader training

It is recommended that the website should be consulted for updates. Hard copies of this handbook are no longer being issued. Please print the latest version of those parts that you need from the website, or ask someone else to do it for you.

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Reader Ministry

- flexible, out there and out loud -

'There are varieties of gifts, there are varieties of services and there are varieties of activities – but it is the same God who gives life to all, in everyone, as the Spirit chooses.' from 1 Cor 12.4-11

There was no one way of doing ministry in the New Testament Church. The patterns seem to have been varied, flexible and even experimental according to the need and context of each place. But what is clear is that everyone was called and involved as the Spirit enabled.

Reader Ministry emerged in the Church of England under the impulse of the same Spirit. It began 150 years ago as a flexible response to the needs of the national church of that time. The Church was awakening to how out of touch it was with large parts of the population. So this trained, nationally authorized, order of lay ministers began as part of a wider missionary and pastoral response – to take the faith into communities that would otherwise never hear about Jesus. This may be the most helpful meaning of the name 'Reader'. It is more than just having a public role in church worship. General levels of education and illiteracy were very low in those days. People who cannot read need to be read to. So Reader ministry began as something exercised 'out loud' in the community. Readers trigger the God-conversation just by being there. They express his love by the way they care. They enable faith in others by sharing their journey with them.

Today the challenge is remarkably similar. Many communities are untouched by Christian faith. We are again seeking to be effective in reaching local communities largely beyond traditional church. This means an imaginative exploring of new patterns of ministry. And once again there is the challenge of speaking aloud to a generation increasingly illiterate about the Bible and Christian faith.

There are presently 145 Readers in the Diocese of Gloucester. And in the wider Church of England there are nearly 10,000. They are a vital part of the ministry and are to be found in every corner of the church life and mission.

The following pages contains all you need to know about Reader ministry, training and support in the Diocese of Gloucester.



The Revd Lee Barnes
Warden of Readers

Email: lbarnes@glosdioc.org.uk
Tel: 07828 622362



Jane Walden
Associate Warden of Readers

Email: jwalden@glosdioc.org.uk
Tel: 01453 886239



Ellie Griffiths-Edwards
Assistant Team Administrator

Email: egriffiths-edwards@glosdioc.org.uk
Tel: 07928 809780

Section I: Introducing Reader Ministry

Over the last 150 years, and in partnership with a growing variety of other expressions of Christian ministry, Reader ministry has grown into a vital element in the communication of the Gospel of Christ, not only in this county, but in every province of the Anglican Communion. Readers exercise a voluntary lay ministry that is nationally accredited, licensed by the Bishop and governed by canon, serving God in His world and in His Church.

Readers are, above everything else, heralds of “the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3). This includes, among other activities, the privilege of preaching, teaching and catechising, as well as leading God’s people in worship. In traditional public services they may be recognised by the blue preaching scarves they wear with their worship robes.

Readers come from a wide variety of backgrounds and occupations and that means they can, as lay people, provide important links between everyday life and church. Being theologically trained, they also have the ministry of being informed lay people living out their faith in many different walks of life.

Readers are theologically trained lay people with a particular ministry of preaching, teaching and leading worship. Many exercise significant pastoral ministry as well - for example, as chaplains in hospitals, in school or in funeral and bereavement ministry.

Readers are part of a church facing many challenges and that is seeking to think in new and adventurous ways about its life and mission. The original call to be ‘flexible, out there and out loud’ is as relevant as ever. It is time for exploring and thinking in fresh ways. So for example, there are now Pioneer Readers working beyond the boundaries of church and parish as evangelists and church planters.

All Readers are members of the staff of their parish and assist in the pastoral and liturgical work of the congregations. They are normally licensed to a specific benefice to work principally there in the deanery of which they are a part.

The Church authorises a creative variety of lay ministries. Alongside these Reader ministry is distinctive in three particular ways.

Readers undertake a substantive and demanding Theological Training

- To equip them for their primary role - to preach and to teach the Word of God;
- To connect Christian faith and theology with the experiences of daily working life.

Readers are trained for Public Ministry

- To lead public worship
- To exercise pastoral leadership within the community, appropriate to their gifts, training and the needs of the situation.

A Transferable Authorisation

Readers are licensed to the Bishop and may serve, with permission, across all the parishes in the diocese. This flexibility means that Readers can be deployed where they are needed – for shorter or longer periods.

To read more about Reader ministry a reading list is attached at Appendix B.

Section 2: From Calling to Selection

2.1 Calling

How a person is called by God to a particular way of service is as varied as all the callings recorded in the Bible. It may begin as an inner conviction or ‘prod’ by the Spirit. Very often the sense of call awakens when others – friends, clergy or members of the congregation recognise it and suggest it, and often it comes as a complete surprise. But they only know they must take it seriously. The discernment process continues as a shared one, involving a variety of people.

The first step is then to seek a meeting with the Discipleship and Vocations Officer, Pauline Godfrey, or one of her team. There are also regular Vocations Days where it is possible to hear others speak of their calling to a variety of forms of ministry.

[Discipleship and Vocations Officer](#)

2.2 The Path to Selection

The purpose of the selection process is to test whether Reader is the ministry to which an individual is called. There is a nationally agreed criterion for Reader Ministry (see below) and this forms the basis for the conversations and interviews that follow. The candidate will meet with the Warden of Readers and possibly others to discuss these. The practical demands of the training course are also explained.

It is important to say that there is no one pathway for everyone. Before proceeding to formal training it is helpful for some to undertake some guided reading, or to take time to strengthen their spiritual life, perhaps with a spiritual director, or perhaps to study on the Christian Foundation Year that runs each year at WEMTC, building up an understanding of their basic understanding of Christian life, faith and belief. This may be essential where someone has had little experience of studying Christian faith before.

2.3 Selection Criteria Ministry in the Church of England

Candidates must be baptised, confirmed and regular communicants of the Church of England, who are familiar with its traditions and practices.

Candidates must have obtained an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), specifically for Reader Training, (even if one is already held for another role). They should also have completed relevant C3 safeguarding training.

This should be completed preferably before starting training. Candidates will then need to go through the process again prior to licensing.

Candidates/Readers should demonstrate evidence of these qualities	At selection for training
1. Vocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own sense of call, motivated by desire to be of service ('obedient'). • Confirmed by others ('realistic'). • Can articulate understanding of lay ministry and commitment to role of Reader ('informed').
2. Ministry in the Church of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptised, episcopally confirmed, regular communicant. • Familiar with traditions and practices of the Church of England. • Aware of distinctiveness of Reader ministry and its place in the context of ordained ministry and other lay ministry and discipleship. • Enthusiastic about the opportunities offered by this licensed ministry in relation to own gifts.
3. Spirituality, liturgy and worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing pattern of personal prayer including regular bible reading, prayer, study and reflection as both individual and corporate discipline. • Sufficiently mature and grounded to sustain his/her daily life. • Desire to grow closer to God in prayer and openness to growth and change in prayer; evidence of rule of life/desire to develop one.
4. Personality and character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can display emotional stability and maturity. • Is seen as stable and trustworthy by others. • Has some understanding of his/her gifts, strengths and weaknesses. • Has a sure pastoral touch and can empathise with others. • Motivated by a discernible love for God's people.
5. Relationships and pastoral skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has some ability to recognise, describe and model open and healthy personal and pastoral relationships. • Can interact well with a variety of people of different ages and personalities.
6. Leadership and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to contribute to and learn from a team. • Has the flexibility to work with a variety of different types of people • Able to invite and respond to critique and, when appropriate, to admit to being in the wrong
7. Mission and evangelism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the desire to make God known in the world in word and deed. • Has a clear sense of the world as context for ministry; is 'earthed' in secular life as fellow learner and enabler for others.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive to different cultures and environments. • Energised by the opportunities offered by today's social, economic and political context and the impact of Christian faith upon them.
8. Faith and discipleship and teaching the Christian faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal commitment to Christ and capacity to share the gospel. • Capacity to communicate the gospel/teach matters of faith effectively. • Knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. • Ability to be articulate so others can understand.
9. Learning and quality of mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to study scripture, tradition and the development of Christian thought. • Able to follow a course of study with an open and enquiring mind. • Openness to formation for ministry and lifelong learning. • Able to engage with hard critical questions in a reflective way.

2.4 Selection

2.4.1 Application and Interview

- An application form is completed and interview date booked.
- References are sought from their Incumbent and from a chosen friend or work colleague.
- The Sub-Warden of their deanery will be asked to meet with them and offer a reference.
- The church PCC is asked to pass a resolution supporting the candidate for the selection and training for Reader ministry (this should be the formal approval of discussions that have already taken place).
- The candidate is invited to interview. A small panel hosted by the Warden of Readers and the Director of Mission and Ministry conducts three interviews based on the core criteria (see below).

At this stage the recommendation for Reader Ministry is conditional upon a successful completion of all aspects of the training course.

2.4.2 Incumbent and PCC support

Before the Incumbent presents a possible Reader candidate for selection, the PCC of the church where s/he is to serve must give its approval. A formal motion is voted upon. Quite often this is not an easy process for a Church Council to undertake. It could be that they do not know the candidate sufficiently well to make an informed decision. On the other hand, they may know the person very well indeed, and therefore perhaps feel uncomfortable about rejecting him/her.

The following guidelines may be helpful in resolving these dilemmas for the PCC members. A potential Reader should have the following qualities:

- S/he must be a committed disciple of Jesus Christ, who senses and evidences a call from God to this work;
- Someone who has been a faithful communicant member of the Church of England for some time (at least six months if s/he has recently moved into the area and been a committed member of his/her former church);
- A person whose main desire is to proclaim the Gospel;
- A person who has already proved his/her worth in other areas of the church's ministry;
- A wise and mature Christian, able to function as a member of a team;
- A good communicator;
- A person who knows the Bible well, seeks to live its truth in his/her daily life, and has a rich prayer life;
- Someone who is known and trusted by the congregation in general;
- A person you believe will be able to keep up with a fairly demanding three-year training course.

It is important that the PCC should be free to say “no” if most members believe that Reader ministry is not God’s will for that potential candidate. This is not a “no” to being called by God. Rather it is a “no” to this particular expression of ministry. The concern is where a person’s gifts truly lie. Closing one door may open another. The call may prove to be to other expressions of ministry - such as Pastoral Worker, for Worship Leading. There are a range of other training opportunities available too. The Apostle Paul wrote of the importance of “speaking the truth in love,’ whereby, ‘we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Ephesians 4:15). Those are the principles that should guide us as we consider God’s will for our brothers and sisters in the ministry of the church.

The cost of training is borne by the Diocese.

However, PCCs are encouraged to consider assisting in financial support – such as for travel to training, the cost of books or robes.

Section 3: Training for Reader Ministry

Training for Reader Ministry in the Diocese of Gloucester is undertaken by Cuddesdon, Gloucester and Hereford (CGH) in partnership with the Diocesan Reader Council. It is usually a three year, p/t course, though allowance may be made for previous study or ministry experience as appropriate.

3.1 The Reader Training Course

At CGH men and women train for both ordained and Reader ministry. The course is delivered at St Mary de Crypt Church (and the Old Crypt Schoolrooms) in Southgate Street, Gloucester. It consists of one formal study evening per week (Thursdays) during term time, four Saturday teaching days per year away from Gloucester, one or two local Saturday workshops, and one weekend residential event for Readers only, together with Readers-in-Training from the Hereford Diocese.

The emphasis is on practical application of theology to ministry so a significant part of the course involves gaining skills for preaching and worship leading in partnership with your home benefice, which are assessed and a report made back to CGH, and a ministry placement in another parish.

Depending on the ministry for which they are preparing, and on their prior experience, candidates will study for a Certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission, taking modules at Levels 4, or in some cases a Diploma, or a Graduate Diploma, at Levels 5 and/or 6 (all at the level of university undergraduate study, validated through Durham University). Again, depending on individual circumstances, some Readers-in-Training may ‘top up’ pre-existing accredited study or focus on a particular area of ministry through an Independent Learning Project.

For a number of those in training it is many years since they last studied in this way. For some it is their first experience of academic study at all. The course caters for all levels of learning and ability and each student has personal tutor support throughout the course.

Care is taken to ensure each applicant undertakes the right course of study to meet their needs and the specific requirements of their training.

For more details about Cuddesdon visit their website: <https://www.rcc.ac.uk/reader-training/training-reader/gloucester>

Admission to Reader Ministry

Once training is satisfactorily completed new Readers are licensed by the Bishop at the annual Reader Day service in the Autumn.

At admission a Reader must make the declarations of assent and of obedience as prescribed in Canon E5.4 (see Appendix B & C) and receives a certificate of admission and a copy of the New Testament. Admission is not repeated when a Reader moves to a new parish or diocese.

Readers may only minister in a diocese, other than that in which they are licensed, with permission to officiate from the bishop of the diocese concerned. Readers invited to conduct a service or to preach outside their own diocese should ask permission from the bishop of the diocese concerned, normally through the warden of readers of that diocese.

Section 4: What do Readers do?

4.1 Historically a Reader is Authorised to:

Read Morning and Evening Prayer (using the alternatives to absolution indicated in the authorized form of service);

- Publish the Banns of Marriage in accordance with the requirements of statute law;
- Read the Word of God, including the Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel at Holy Communion;
- Preach at any service of the church;
- Catechise (give religious instruction);
- Receive and present the offerings of the people.

A Reader is also permitted by Canon:

- To visit the sick, to read the Scriptures and pray with them;
- To teach in Sunday School and elsewhere;
- Generally to undertake such pastoral and educational work and to give any ministry as the incumbent (or Bishop) may direct.

See Appendix A: (Canons E4, E5 and E6)

In addition a Reader today is often involved in a wide range of other ministries. These may include:

- Being the lead preacher and pastor at another church in the benefice;
- Leading a house group or several house groups;
- Baptism preparation;
- Helping the bereaved;

- Pioneering and church planting;
- Leading local implementation of “Fresh Expressions”;
- Leading “Messy Church”;
- Children and youth work;
- Community building;
- Chaplaincy (to care home, hospital, school, uniformed youth organisation, work places and others);

Some or all of the above require specific training and oversight, and depend on both the needs of the parish and the gifting of the Reader.

The extent to which a Reader undertakes any of the duties outlined, or others, should form the basis of discussion and agreement in the Written Working Agreement (see 5.1).

4.2 Readers in the Diocese of Gloucester

4.2.1 Diocesan Vision

Readers are a vital part of *LIFE - Together* - the present vision of the diocese for its life and renewal (Life –



leadership, imagination, faith and engagement) – with its commitment to ‘Developing diverse lay and ordained leaders’ and ‘Nurturing everyday disciples.’

For more details go to <https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/>

4.2.2 **Holy Communion**

A Reader is also permitted by right of his or her licence to distribute the elements at Holy Communion. In this diocese this includes to the sick and housebound immediately after a celebration of the Holy Communion in the local church, at a later time or from the sacrament reserved in church.

With the specific and written agreement of the Bishop, Readers may be authorised to lead Public Worship with Communion by Extension. Such a service will normally have been planned by the incumbent concerned who will have asked for the Bishop's authorisation.

For more information see:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/principal-services.aspx>

4.2.3 **Funerals**

A Reader is authorised, after appropriate training, to bury the dead, or read the burial service before, at or after a cremation, but only with the goodwill of the persons responsible and at the invitation of the minister of the parish.

Readers must attend the approved training course before they are eligible to take funerals. It is also expected that they will have at least 12 months' experience of leading worship as a licensed Reader before undertaking this training.

4.2.4 Reader Ministry during a Clergy Vacancy

It is normally appropriate for the Reader's ministry to continue with supervision and support from the Area Dean and/or designated minister and in consultation with the churchwardens. The local sub-warden of Readers will also offer support.

A potential incumbent will be made aware of any existing Readers and declare acceptance of the principles and practice of Reader ministry.

Section 5: Reader Ministry Support and Review

Even when it is fulfilling, all Christian ministry is costly and demanding and needs affirmation, encouragement and resources if it is to develop and flourish. Readers are encouraged to give thought as to where their support and nurture is found. Some Readers meet in small groups for mutual support and encouragement.

In the Diocese of Gloucester ministerial support is offered in a variety of ways.

Important provision is made for Readers and their ministry development is available in four particular ways.

5.1 Working Agreement

Every licensed Reader in the diocese should have an up to date Working Agreement. This is a flexible document that defines expectations, outlines areas of responsibility and clarifies areas of accountability. A Working Agreement needs to include:

- The particular ways in which the Reader's ministry is to be expressed eg frequency of preaching each month; frequency of leading services each month; frequency of leading Bible study/home groups; other kinds of ministry in which the Reader is involved.
- The expected time commitment for the ministry.
- The Reader's working relationship with other ministers and/or the local ministry team; and recognition of a Reader's role in other church structures and groups.
- Arrangements for regular meetings between the Reader, clergy and other staff for prayer, supervision and planning.
- Expectations of the Reader's continual ministerial development (CMD).
- Arrangements for reimbursement of expenses incurred through performance of the Reader's ministry and CMD.
- Agreement of Sundays another time 'off' and times for retreat and spiritual refreshment.

Careful attention therefore needs to be given to:

- Expectations — what the parish expects of the Reader and vice versa.
- Actual responsibilities.
- The Reader's ministry in relation to family and work commitments.
- Accountability, supervision and support.
- Relationships with local church structures of leadership and decision-making.

NB Readers may be members of a PCC (ex officio) if the annual general meeting so determines, or as a normally elected member; a Reader's membership of a Deanery Synod is subject to the Reader being elected as a lay member by the annual meeting of the parish concerned.

- Ministry beyond the Reader's own parish and the possibility of redeployment.
- Reimbursement of expenses, where appropriate.

Copies of the written working agreement should be kept by the Reader, the incumbent and the Secretary of the PCC to which the Reader is licensed. Copies should be available to Church Wardens, PCC and other members of the ministry team.

A copy of the Working Agreement should be forwarded to the Warden of Readers.

To obtain a copy of the Working agreement guidelines and template, contact the Assistant Team Administrator (as above).

5.2 **Annual Conversation**

It is expected that Readers will be meeting on a regular basis with their incumbents for fellowship and reflection on their ministry and experience. Such patterns vary with each parish and team but should be agreed in the Working Agreement.

Once a year Incumbent and Reader are expected to meet for an 'Annual Conversation'. This will be a time to review the events and tasks of the past year, to discuss any changes to the Working Agreement, to reflect on the focus of their ministry and, if it is changing, to consider where further training might be appropriate.

Guidelines for this conversation can be obtained by contacting the Assistant Team Administrator (as above).

5.3 **Deanery Sub-Wardens**

Each deanery has a Sub-Warden of Readers. They meet regularly with the Warden, offer pastoral support to Readers in their locality, and seek to encourage the fellowship and support that all ministry needs. Readers are encouraged to contact them with any issues or concerns.

Details of Sub-Wardens can be found at **Appendix F**

5.4 Reader Ministry Review

Every three years Readers with a full licence or with PtO will be invited to review their ministry. The review is designed to provide support and encouragement, reflection and challenge, guidance and resources for the reader in their ministry calling. It is not a *performance* review. But it does have the aim of assisting the Reader in the most effective use of their gifts. A team of trained reviewers undertakes this and contributions from the Reader's incumbent and a chosen friend or work colleague assists the process. By means of an agreed summary, the review will enable the Reader to set appropriate goals for the development of their ministry and gifts and to plan how to make this possible. Between the three yearly reviews the Annual Conversation is an important way that agreed goals are monitored and encouraged to come to fruition.

A copy of the Review papers can be obtained by contacting the Assistant Team Administrator (as above).

5.5 Counselling Support

The diocese recognises there are times when life and ministry throws up stresses that need professional support. It may be possible for licensed clergy and Readers (and their spouses/partners) to have up to six free sessions of counselling from a counsellor provided by the diocese (and thereafter by negotiation). This is entirely confidential.

To arrange this, Readers should contact the **Head of HR & Safeguarding**.

5.6 Summary of Commitments to Reader Support, Training & Flourishing in the Diocese of Gloucester

- An extensive annual program of training events
- A small training grant.
- Two annual Reader study and fellowship days
- An induction program for the first three years of Reader ministry.
- Regional sub-wardens for local support
- It may be possible to have confidential counselling for Reader and family
- Working Agreements
- 'Annual conversation' with incumbent (or designated colleague) to review ministry and Working Agreement
- Ministry review every three years with trained reviewer
- Encouraged peer-to-peer support including a [closed Facebook group](#) and some deanery specific WhatsApp groups.
- We also encourage you to sign up to the Diocese newsletter to keep up to date with relevant news and courses. We specifically recommend *The Bulletin* and *Developing Your Ministry* and other training information. [You can sign up to these here.](#)

Section 6: Reader Continuing Ministry Development

6.1 'Developing Your Ministry' Programme

Throughout the year in the diocese and region there are a wide variety of training opportunities for all aspects of Christian ministry. Readers are encouraged to plan imaginatively for the deepening of their skills, knowledge and spiritual life.

Contact the Assistant Team Administrator to obtain a copy.

6.2 Preaching Peer Support Scheme

A core part of the Reader calling is to preaching and teaching. This demanding and important gift needs to receive continuing support, encouragement and training if it is to stay fresh and be helped to develop and grow. Experience shows that Readers and clergy alike receive little if any regular informed feedback on their sermons. In more far-flung areas the reality is that some rarely preach with colleagues present at all. But there is no substitute for receiving feedback from people who actually hear you preaching.

How it works: 2-3 Readers within a particular area commit to hearing each other preach once every 12-15 months. They meet afterwards to give feedback as 'critical friends'. A preaching evaluation form is available to help guide this. (One or two members of the congregation could be invited to complete these too – but not be part of the feedback discussion itself.)

Feedback needs to focus on delivery, sermon structure, use of Bible and application. The aim is to provide a context of mutual encouragement and support where constructive, practical feedback can be offered as 'critical friends'.

Guidelines and feedback forms can be accessed here:

www.gloucester.anglican.org/preaching-support-for-readers

At the bottom of the document you will find the link to the form.

6.3 Grants for training

All readers with full licence are eligible for an annual training grant of £160.

The Adams-Myland Fund give grants to enable further training for Readers. At present the maximum grant is £450 p.a. (so if it's a 3-year course, it's 3 x £450).

Guidelines and the form are here:-

<https://transformingministry.co.uk/adams-myland-fund/>

Contact Assistant Team Administrator for more details

Section 7: Licenses: Categories and Guidelines

Important changes have been made to the licencing of Readers from April 2017

7.1 Permission to Officiate (PtO)

(With effect from April 2017 the diocese ceased to use the category of PtO for Readers. Instead Readers minister under a full licence until the age of 80. At this point they may seek to retire as Reader Emeritus. In future Readers will simply remain in 'full' licenced ministry unto the age of 80 or when they choose to retire from ministry. Their level of ministry involvement is a matter of annual review with their incumbent.)

Those who are presently PtO may continue to minister until the age of 80. They may then retire as Reader Emeritus (see below). However if a Reader is willing and able to continue

to minister beyond the age of 80 this should be discussed with their incumbent and is subject to annual review.

A Reader and incumbent should take into account that Readers with Permission to Officiate have the opportunity to continue with ministry *when so invited*. They have the choice of whether or not to accept invitations to preach, lead services or conduct funerals, but have no obligation to do so. A working agreement is the best way to clarify expectations on all sides so that any regular, even if infrequent, commitments are agreed; for example, in a multi-parish rural benefice a Reader with PtO might agree to lead morning and evening prayer once a quarter on a given weekday, or there could be a regular but relatively light commitment to pastoral ministry.

Readers with PtO should not be *ex officio* on the PCC, but may be elected or co-opted at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

7.2 Reader Emeritus

On their retirement from active ministry Readers are given the title Reader Emeritus. In the Diocese of Gloucester it is anticipated that a Reader would receive this designation at the age of 80. At this point the Reader ceases active ministry. As their Safeguarding clearance will no longer be current it is important to stress they should not accept invitations to minister.

A Reader Emeritus ceases to be a member of a PCC or any other committee/body where membership was dependent on being a Reader (though, of course, an individual may stand for election in his or her own right). Similarly, automatic subscription to *The Reader* magazine, and support from the Continuing Ministerial Development grant scheme, both cease. Readers Emeriti are encouraged to make use of learning opportunities as they feel appropriate but unfortunately no central funding is available.

If, on reaching the age of eighty a Reader does not wish to cease ministry then, with the agreement of their incumbent, they simply continue to minister under their current licence, reviewed annually.

Action to Transfer to Emeritus

- a) This begins with a conversation between Reader and incumbent.
- b) Having agreed, please inform the Assistant Team Administrator.
- c) The Church Wardens and PCC should be informed – and suitably note the significance of this moment to the local church and its ministry.

7.3 **Deployment and Transfer**

Readers may only minister in a diocese other than that in which they are licensed, with permission from the bishop of the diocese concerned. Readers invited to conduct a service or to preach outside their own diocese should ask permission from the bishop of the diocese concerned, normally through the Warden of Readers of that diocese.

In the event of Readers transferring in or out of a diocese the following guidelines are in place.

When Readers move to another diocese, this procedure should be used:

- a) The Reader notifies the Warden of the move to another diocese, in advance if possible.
- b) On arrival in the new diocese, the Reader should contact the Incumbent or minister in charge of the parish where s/he intends to worship regularly.
- c) After the Reader has worshipped at the new location for a sufficient period, normally six months, the incumbent or minister should apply to the warden of the diocese, in consultation with the Reader and with the agreement of the PCC to ask that the Reader be licensed.
- d) The warden of the diocese to which the Reader has moved should contact the warden of the diocese which the Reader has left asking if the Reader is in good standing or if there is any reason why a new licence should not be given.

When Readers move into the diocese this procedure should be used:

- a. The Reader is expected to settle into their new church for around six months. Should they then wish to seek a license to minister they should talk to their incumbent.
- a) The incumbent should approach the Warden of Readers – after obtaining the approval of the PCC. The warden informs the sub-warden (if not already done).
- b) Appropriate forms are completed and returned to the warden.
- c) The warden contacts the Reader's previous incumbent for his/her recommendation, or if this is not forthcoming, he contacts his opposite number in the diocese concerned.
- d) On receipt of a favourable recommendation and, after completion of the requirements of the House of Bishops' child protection policy the warden will ask the bishop to license the Reader.
- e) The transferred Reader is licensed by the bishop at the Annual Reader Day, or earlier, at the bishop's discretion.

Section 8: Reader Finances and Expenses

- a) Readers are voluntary and unpaid ministers and do not accept fees for their services.
- b) Readers should be reimbursed for travelling and other expenses incurred through the performance of their duties. In the case of expenses relating to duties undertaken in the parish where the Reader is licensed, arrangements for their payment should be clearly indicated in the written working agreement over duties. Mileage should be paid by the parish at the diocesan rate (45p per mile). In the case of expenses incurred through serving elsewhere, known as 'casual duty fees', the parish using the services of Readers should ensure that travelling expenses are fully reimbursed. Casual duty fees are payable to "visiting" unpaid ministers who deputise for regular ministers at a regular Sunday service or major feast day. A "visiting" minister is one who is neither licensed to nor habitually worships within the benefice. A PCC is to offer the casual duty fee to visiting unpaid clergy for taking Sunday or major feast day services and reimburse any travelling expenses.
- c) When Readers conduct a funeral, they may choose to retain half the fee. It is normal for Readers to collect the fee payable from the funeral director in respect of the service and to pass the balance on to the incumbent or the PCC Treasurer. All other reasonable expenses for travel incurred through conducting the service and providing the related pastoral care for the bereaved family should be claimed from the PCC Treasurer and not deducted from the fee. If a PCC needs to request the assistance of an otherwise unpaid officiating minister at a wedding or funeral the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance (GDBF) permits the PCC to offer this minister half of the statutory fee due to the DBF. This includes all unpaid licensed ministers and ministers with permission to officiate (PTOs) including SSMs, Readers and retired clergy.

Section 9: Diocesan and National Organisation

9.1 Diocesan Reader Council

The Council meets three times a year and exercises oversight over all aspects of Reader life, support and training in the diocese.

Membership comprises;

Chairman: Bishop of Tewkesbury
Warden of Readers
Director of Reader Training (WEMTC)
Director of Mission & Ministry
Honorary Secretary
Three elected Reader Representatives
Two elected Sub Warden Representatives
One elected Reader representing Reader in training

9.2 Central Reader Council

At national level, the Central Readers' Council (CRC) works to enhance the contribution of Readers to the overall ministry of the Church, particularly to encourage the most effective integration with other forms of ministry, ordained or lay.

As well as administrative co-ordination and services for Diocesan Readers' Boards, it arranges training conferences; publishes a quarterly magazine (*Transforming Ministries*) and provides a forum for the exchange of ideas between Diocesan Readers' boards. Every licensed Reader in the Diocese automatically receives a copy of *Transforming Ministries*, published quarterly.

The CRC arranges an Annual General Meeting, at which the Diocese of Gloucester is represented by the Warden of Readers, the Hon Secretary of the Readers Council and one other person. The Annual General Meeting elects an Executive Committee.

The Council works in close association with the Ministry Division of the General Synod of the Church of England.

The Council is a registered charity (number 271916), and its address is: Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ.

The website is: www.readers.cofe.anglican.org

This is a valuable location for resources for Readers, in addition to being an administrative site.

Section 10: Safeguarding and Child Protection Checks

Like all other ministers holding the Bishop's licence, whether ordained or lay, every Reader is required to apply periodically for an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service and to submit a renewed signed confidential declaration. No one may continue to exercise a licensed ministry unless this periodic renewal of checks has been undertaken satisfactorily. This procedure will be initiated from the Diocesan Safeguarding Office when it is due.

Any enquiries about this process and its recording should be made to the [Safeguarding Officer](#).

Appendix A: Canon Law Concerning Reader Ministry

Canon E4 “Of Readers”

1. A lay person, whether man or woman, who is baptised and confirmed and who satisfies the bishop that s/he is a regular communicant of the Church of England, may be admitted by the bishop of the diocese to the office of Reader in the Church and licensed by him to perform the duties which may lawfully be performed by a Reader according to the provisions of paragraph 2 of this canon or which may from time to time be so determined by Act of Synod.
2. It shall be lawful for a Reader:
 1. To visit the sick, to read and pray with them, to teach in Sunday School and elsewhere, and generally to undertake such pastoral and educational work and to give such assistance to any minister as the bishop may direct;
 2. During the time of divine service to read Morning and Evening Prayer (save for the Absolution), to publish banns of marriage at Morning and Evening Prayer (on occasions on which a layman is permitted by the statute law so to do, and, in accordance with the provisions of that law), to read the Word of God, to preach, to catechise the children, and to receive and present the offerings of the people:
 3. To distribute the holy sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to the people.
3. The Bishop may also authorise a Reader to bury the dead or read the burial service before, at or after a cremation but only, in each case, with the goodwill of the persons responsible, and at the invitation of the minister of the parish or an extra- parochial place within the meaning of section 1 of the Deaconesses and Lay Ministry Measure 1972.
4. When a cure is vacant, the reference in this paragraph to the minister of a parish shall be construed as a reference to the Rural Dean.
5. The Bishop of every diocese shall keep a register wherein shall be entered the names of every person whom s/he has either admitted to the office of Reader or licensed to exercise that office in any place.

Canon E5 “Of The Nomination and Admission of Readers”

1. A candidate for the office of Reader in a parish or district shall be nominated to the Bishop by the minister of that parish or district; and a candidate for the said office in a wider area by one of the Area Deans or Archdeacons after consultation with the minister of his parish or district.
2. The nominator in making such a nomination shall satisfy the bishop that the said person is of good life, sound in faith, a regular communicant and well fitted for the work of a Reader, and provide all such other information about the said person and the duties which it is desired that s/he should perform as the Bishop may require.
3. No person shall be admitted to the office of Reader in the Church except it be found on examination, held by the Bishop or by competent persons appointed by the Bishop for this

purpose, that s/he possesses a sufficient knowledge of the Holy Scripture and of the doctrine and worship of the Church of England as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, that s/he is able to read the services of the Church plainly, distinctly, audibly and reverently, and that s/he is capable both of teaching and preaching.

4. Every person who is admitted to the office of Reader shall first, in the presence of the Bishop by whom s/he is to be so admitted or of the Bishop's commissary, make the declarations set out below, the preface which preceded the Declaration of Assent in paragraph 1(1) of Canon C15 (with the appropriate adaptations) having first been spoken by the Bishop or commissary.

"I, AB, do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness; and in public prayer I will use only the forms of service which are authorised or allowed by Canon.

"I, AB, will give due obedience to the Lord Bishop of C and his successors in all things lawful and honest."

5. The Bishop shall admit a person to the office of Reader by the delivery of the New Testament but without imposition of hands.
6. The Bishop shall give to the newly-admitted Reader a certificate of his/her admission to office; and the admission shall not be repeated if the Reader shall move to another diocese.

Canon E6 "Of The Licensing of Readers"

1. No person who has been admitted to the office of Reader shall exercise his/her office in any diocese until s/he has been licensed so to do by the Bishop thereof: Provided that, when any Reader is to exercise his/her office temporarily in any diocese, the written permission of the Bishop shall suffice.
 - a. A licence authorising a Reader to serve in a benefice in respect of which a team ministry is established may be in a form which specifies the term of years for which the licence shall have effect.
2. Every Reader who is to be licensed to exercise his/her office in any diocese shall first, in the presence of the Bishop by whom s/he is to be licensed, or of the commissary of such Bishop,
 - a. make the declarations of assent and of obedience in the form and manner prescribed by paragraph 4 of Canon E5;
 - b. make the declaration following:

“I, AB, about to be licensed to exercise the office of Reader promote peace and unity, and to conduct myself as becomes a worker for Christ, for the good of his Church, and for the spiritual welfare of all people. I will give due obedience to the Bishop of C. and his successors and the minister in whose cure I serve, in all things lawful and honest.”

If the declarations of assent and obedience have been made on the same occasion in pursuance of paragraph 4 of Canon E5, it shall not be necessary to repeat them in pursuance of this paragraph and in the declaration set out above, the words “the Bishop of C. and his successors and” may be omitted.

- I. The Bishop of the diocese may by notice in writing revoke summarily, and without further process, any licence granted to a Reader within his diocese for any cause which appears to him to be good and reasonable, after having given the Reader sufficient opportunity of showing reason to the contrary; and the notice shall notify the Reader that s/he may, within twenty-eight days from the date on which s/he receives the notice, appeal to the Archbishop of the province in which the diocese is situated.

On such appeal, the Archbishop may either hear the appeal himself or appoint a person holding the office of diocesan Bishop or suffragan Bishop in his province (otherwise than in the diocese concerned) to hear the appeal in his place; and, after hearing the appeal or, if he has appointed a Bishop to hear the appeal in his place, after receiving a report in writing from that Bishop, the Archbishop may confirm, vary or cancel the revocation of the licence as he considers just and proper, and there shall be no appeal from the decision of the Archbishop.

Where the seat of the Archbishop is vacant or the Archbishop is also the Bishop of the diocese concerned, any reference in the preceding provisions of this paragraph to the Archbishop of the province shall be construed as a reference to the Archbishop of the other province, but any Bishop appointed by the Archbishop of the other province by virtue of this paragraph shall be a Bishop serving in the province which contains the diocese concerned.

Any appeal under this paragraph shall be conducted in accordance with rules approved by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; and any such rules may provide for the appointment of one or more persons to advise the Archbishop or Bishop hearing the appeal on any question of law arising in the course thereof.

- a. Where a Bishop has granted a licence to a Reader to serve in his diocese for a term of years specified in the licence, the Bishop may revoke that licence under paragraph 3 of this Canon before the expiration of that term, and where he does so the Reader shall have the like right of appeal as any other Reader whose licence is revoked under that paragraph.

No Bishop shall licence any Reader to be a stipendiary in any place until he has satisfied himself that adequate provision has been made for the stipend of the said Reader, for his/her insurance against sickness or accident, and for a pension on his/her retirement.

Appendix B: Reader Promises

Canon Law Concerning Reader Ministry

From the service of the Admission and Licensing of Readers

The Bishop says

My brothers and sisters, God has gathered us into the fellowship of the universal Church. As members together of his body, Christ calls us to minister in his name and, according to our gifts, to be instruments of his love in the world. Within this ministry, Readers are called to serve the Church of God and to work together with clergy and other ministers. They are to lead public worship, to preach and teach the word of God, to assist at the Eucharist and to share in pastoral and evangelistic work. As authorized lay ministers, they are to encourage the ministries of God's people, as the Spirit distributes gifts among us all. They are called to help the whole Church to participate in God's mission to the world.

The Questions

The Bishop says

In order that we may be satisfied that those being admitted or licensed are ready to begin the ministry we lay upon them today, they must now answer the questions we put to them.

Furthermore, to encourage them in their commitment and in the renewal of their own ministry, I invite all the Readers present to renew their own commitment to ministry.

The Readers stand. The Bishop asks

Do you believe that God is calling you to this ministry?

Candidates I do so believe.
All Readers **I do so believe.**

Will you be faithful in leading the people of God in worship, and in preaching the word to them?

Candidates By the grace of God, I will.
All Readers **By the grace of God, I will.**

Will you be diligent in prayer, in reading Holy Scripture, and in all studies that will deepen your faith and fit you to bear witness to the truth of the gospel?

Candidates By the grace of God, I will.
All Readers **By the grace of God, I will.**

Will you endeavour to fashion your life according to the way of Christ?

Candidates By the grace of God, I will.
All Readers **By the grace of God, I will.**

Will you promote unity, peace and love in the Church and in the world, and especially among those whom you serve?

Candidates By the grace of God, I will.
All Readers **By the grace of God, I will.**

Will you work closely with your colleagues in ministry and encourage the gifts of others?

Candidates By the grace of God, I will.
All Readers **By the grace of God, I will.**

The Bishop says

Almighty God,
who has given you the will to undertake these things,
give you also the strength to perform them,
that he may complete that work that he has begun in you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Readers sit. The Bishop invites the clergy to whom those being admitted and licensed will be colleagues to stand, and asks them

Will you work closely with your new Readers and encourage them to use their gifts and develop their ministry?
We will.

Will you care for your Readers and their families?
We will.

Will you commend them to the people amongst whom they will minister?
We will.

The candidates turn to face the congregation. The Bishop invites the congregation to stand and asks them

Brothers and sisters,
these men and women have been chosen for the office of Reader.

Will you uphold and encourage them in their ministry?
All **We will.**

Will you continue to pray for them?
All **We will.**

The Admission

The candidates for admission stand and the Bishop admits them to the office of Reader by the delivery of the Holy Bible, with these words

N, I admit you as a Reader in the Church,
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

The Warden of Readers vests each of the newly admitted Readers with a blue scarf.

The Licensing

The Bishop hands the Readers who have moved into the Diocese or into a new parish, and the newly admitted Readers, their licences with these words

N, receive authority to exercise the office of Reader in this Diocese.
May the Lord be with you in all your work and ministry
from this day onwards.

All **Amen.**

When all have received their licences the Bishop says to them

We welcome you as ministers of God's word.

All **May the word of Christ dwell in you richly.**

When all have been admitted and licensed they kneel and the Bishop blesses them, saying

May the Lord give you wisdom, courage, strength and love
to do his will,
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
rest upon you, and on your work done in his name,
now and always.

All **Amen.**

Appendix C: Reader Declarations

Made before the Bishop before the service of licensing or transfer of license.

The bishop reads the Preface to the Declaration of Assent

The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation. Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, *The Book of Common Prayer* and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. In the declaration you are about to make, will you affirm your loyalty to this inheritance of faith as your inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to those in your care?

I, A B, do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness; and in public prayer I will use only the forms of service which are authorized or allowed by Canon.

I, A B, will give due obedience to the Bishop of N and his successors in all things lawful and honest.

I, A B, about to be licensed to exercise the office of Reader in the Diocese [Parish] of N, do hereby promise to endeavour, as far as in me lies, to promote peace and unity, and to conduct myself as becomes a worker for Christ, for the good of his Church, and for the spiritual welfare of all people. I will give due obedience to the minister in whose cure I may serve, in all things lawful and honest.

Appendix D: Professional Code of Conduct for Readers

In the event of difficulties within pastoral or working relationships Readers are encouraged first to talk to their incumbent (when appropriate) or the Warden of Readers. The diocese can offer mediation.

For areas of more formal concern the Diocesan Handbook contains:

- a. A Code of Ministerial Practice for Reader Ministry states the clear and consistent guidelines, expected behaviours and standards of good practice for Readers and those supporting them in their parish settings across the diocese.
- b. The Grievance Procedure for Reader Ministry setting out clear and consistent guidelines for dealing with grievances relating to the ministry and/or conduct of Readers in their settings across the diocese to ensure that Readers are able to pursue grievances without fear of sanction to promote good working relationships between Readers, clergy, accredited lay ministers and members of church communities.
- c. The Disciplinary Procedure for Reader Ministry setting out clear and consistent guidelines for dealing with disciplinary issues relating to the ministry and/or conduct of Readers in their settings across the diocese to promote good working relationships between Readers, clergy, accredited lay ministers and members of church communities.

These may be found at:

www.gloucester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/1475828582.pdf

Appendix E: Bibliography about Reader Ministry

Title	Subject	Publisher
A way forward in ministry	The Deployment of Readers	ABM Ministry Paper No 20 (Nov 1998)
The Training of Readers		ABM Ministry Paper No 9 (Aug 1994)
Moderation of Reader Training (1994-1999)		Archbishops' Council
Equipping the Saints	Moderation of Reader Training: 1999 — 2003	Church House Publishing
Reader Ministry and Training: 2000 and Beyond		Archbishops' Council
Selection for Reader Ministry		ABM Policy Paper No 7 (Jan 1998)
Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry		Archbishops' Council
Bridging the Gap Eds. G W Kuhrt & P Nappin	Reader Ministry Today	Church House Publishing
Readers & Worship in the Church of England Carolyn Hedley	Reader Ministry	Grove Booklet Worship Series No 115
Reader Ministry Explored Cathy Rowling and Paula Gooder		SPCK (2009)
Reader ministry Today Charles Read and Philip Tovey		Grove Books W203 (2010)

The above, as well as Annual Reports are all available from the Central Readers' Council, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ

Tel: 0207 898 1401/1417; www.readers.cofe.anglican.org/crc_whos_who.php

See also Church House Publishing www.chpublishing.co.uk

Grove Booklets from: Grove Books Ltd, Ridley Hall Road, Cambridge CB3 9HU

Tel: 01223 464748; www.grovebooks.co.uk

See also 'Reader Upbeat', a major report on Reader Ministry for the General Synod

<http://search.churchofengland.org/results.aspx?k=Reader%20UPbeat>

Appendix F: Deanery Sub-Warden list



DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER SUBWARDENS OF READERS

Mrs Denise Hogan Reader at Mid Wye-dean	denisehogan@live.co.uk	Forest South
Mrs Angela Cole Reader at Twyning etc	angelacole135@hotmail.com	Tewkesbury & Winchcombe
Vacant	Vacant	North Cotswold
Vacant	Vacant	Wotton
Mr Derrick Pierce Reader at Avening-with-Cherington	derrick.pierce@hotmail.com	Cirencester
Mr Gordon Land Reader in South Cotswold team	walreader44@gmail.com	Cirencester
Mrs Sue Rodford Reader in St Oswald Coney Hill with St Aldate	rodford_sue@hotmail.com	Gloucester City
Mr Rob Poole Reader in Greenway Benefice	reader.rob.bswb@gmail.com	Severn Vale
Mr Dereck Freeman Reader in South Cheltenham team	dereckf@tiscali.co.uk	Cheltenham
Mrs Linda Jarvis Reader at Minchinhampton etc	lm_jarvis@hotmail.com	Stroud

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