

# Wakefield Ministry Scheme



**Will I be a “Vicar’s wife”?**

**Some information for spouses of  
people considering Ordained  
Local Ministry**

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If you would like to contact a member of diocesan staff, you may find the following details useful:

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should be reviewed regularly in the light of experience and changing circumstances. A preliminary version is produced before a candidate goes to a selection conference, so that selectors can be sure that the parish is a suitable place for the candidate to minister, and that the candidate is suitable for the parish.

### **What does it cost?**

When someone is recommended for training for ordained ministry, the church nationally undertakes to pay the cost of the training. There is provision for reimbursement of the cost of travel expenses, and a modest contribution towards the cost of books. Prior to ordination a grant to cover the cost of robes etc is available from the diocese. After ordination expenses of office should be paid by the parish.

Sometimes OLMs feel diffident about claiming back money which is available to them. It would be ideal if everyone claimed the money due to them (so that no-one feels under any pressure not to), whatever they feel it right to do with the money given.

### **Who can I talk to about this?**

If your partner is enthusiastic about applying for Ordained Local Ministry, they will probably tell you most of what you wish to know. However, it can often help to talk to others. Your Vicar has a particular responsibility for you as one of their parishioners, so you should feel free to approach him/her at any time. The Diocesan Directors of Ordinands and staff of the Wakefield Ministry Scheme (contact details below) are always happy to talk. If it would help to discuss this with the husband or wife of someone who is already in Ordained Local Ministry, the following people have kindly offered to allow their details to be made public, and would be pleased to hear from you:

You may be very pleased to receive this leaflet, or you may be wondering why anyone thought it might be useful. Some people whose husband or wife is considering Ordained Local Ministry (OLM) feel quite apprehensive about the whole process and its implications for them and their partner, while for others it seems a natural development and doesn't cause any anxiety. Whatever your reaction, we hope you will find this information useful. If you have further questions, or would appreciate someone to talk to, there are details towards the end of the leaflet.

### **Are there particular expectations of me?**

No. The person exploring a vocation to OLM is your spouse. How far you wish to be involved in this process is up to you, and there should be no hidden expectations that you will fulfil a particular role in the parish (arranging the flowers and making the tea is the stereotyped role for a vicar's wife, not reality, whether for a vicar or OLM!) It is important that you make your own decisions about whether or how much you wish to be involved in the life of the church, whether or not your partner is ordained.

It is vital that you are happy with the decisions your spouse is making. To be ordained includes taking vows, as does getting married, and the church would not be happy for someone to make ordination vows without consideration of the opinions of their spouse. During the selection process for your spouse, one of the DDOs will offer to meet you to discuss any concerns you may have, but please feel free to get in contact if you have questions or concerns before that meeting.

This leaflet is intended to give you some information about OLM, so that you have more idea what your spouse is considering.

## **What is Ordained Local Ministry?**

OLM is a form of ordained ministry (either as a deacon or a priest) which operates in the candidate's home parish. OLMs work with a group of people, both clergy and lay, carrying out their ministry together in the parish. In the Diocese of Wakefield this operates formally through the Wakefield Ministry Scheme, and if you would like to know more about that, please ask for further information.

OLMs offer their time and talents in a voluntary capacity, but the parish should make sure that expenses are paid so they are not out of pocket as a result of their ministry. They work with an incumbent (Vicar, Rector or Priest-in-charge, depending on the parish) who is responsible for the overall running of the parish; however this priest may be running several churches, so may not be around in the local community as much as some OLMs.

## **How does the selection process work?**

Candidates for Ordained Local Ministry are considered in the same way as any candidate for ordained ministry. The Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO) is responsible for a process which includes an informal exploration of the person's sense of call from God, and their understanding of ordained ministry, and also formal interviews, first with people in the diocese, and then at a Bishops' Advisory Panel, which is a 48 hour residential event.

Because the parish context of an OLM's ministry is vital, there will also be discussions in the parish at an early stage, to ensure that the candidate has the support of the congregation and can work well with the other leaders in the church.

If either the candidate or their spouse have been married before, and a previous partner is still living, there needs to be

special permission from the Archbishop of York for the ordination to go ahead. The DDO will be happy to brief you on what's involved.

## **What's the training like?**

Ordinands continue to take part in parish-based training with other members of the church (the Core Group). In addition there is a special ordination training programme lasting between two and three years depending on the prior learning of the ordinand. Some of this takes place alongside ordinands training for other forms of ordained ministry on the Northern Ordination Course and at the College of the Resurrection. After the initial year, the training includes a residential component, so ordinands are away overnight about once a month. They will also need time at home for reading and writing assignments.

## **How much work will an OLM do in the parish?**

That depends very much on the circumstances of the particular OLM, and the amount of time they feel it right to offer. Some OLMs are not in paid work, and offer a substantial amount of time, while others offer a few hours a week alongside a full-time job. It is important that decisions made between an OLM and their parish respect the voluntary nature of the ministry offered.

To try to ensure good working relationships, it is important that expectations are spelled out clearly. This is done by negotiating a working agreement, which will include the issue of how much time is offered, and will say something about particular areas of ministry that an OLM and their parish believe would be right for them. It will also include details of what the OLM can expect from the parish and the incumbent (eg time for staff meetings, payment of expenses). It must be stressed that this is not a contract of employment and it