



Ministry Areas' Workshop #2

Communication:

How might we keep everyone in touch, contributing to the life of the MA, and getting across the big picture? How do we communicate with the communities we serve?

Introduction: A new context:

In a situation where there is one church building with a single congregation, enjoying the ministry of one parish priest in partnership with one PCC, communication is relatively straightforward, and everyone can muddle through without careful consideration of any policy or strategy for internal communication. But that is a far cry from our current situation. Though they may well have particular oversight responsibility, clergy and lay ministers serve as members of ministry teams, and the Ministry Area Council takes responsibility for decisions that affect several congregations. Under those circumstances, a strategy for MA communication is essential, otherwise church members could quickly feel that decisions are made about which they have little understanding or consultation. Each congregation is different, and each MA is different: there is no 'one-size-fits-all' policy. Nonetheless, it would be wise for each MA to consider the following:

A] Internal Communications

1] DECISION MAKING generally needs to be more careful. To that extent, an MA Leadership Team (MALT) functions rather more like a kind of dispersed *Programme* style church staff team, rather than like a small traditional Deanery Chapter. A key feature of decision-making processes in a *Programme* church culture is that decision making processes are more structured and formal, with a higher degree of *mutual deference*, *consultation*, and team *self-discipline*. By contrast, decision making processes in a *Pastoral* style church are typically far more informal, and a traditional Deanery Chapter tends to be a gathering of clergy who work largely autonomously of each other.

2] TRANSPARENCY - What is the approach of the MA towards transparency? Relatively little ever needs to be kept in strict confidence. Transparency takes effort though: things sometimes feel as though they are being kept secret simply because the effort taken to communicate news got lost in the midst of the many other tasks on the to-do list. The MA needs to make decisions about how transparent its decision-making processes are going to be, and how responsibility for that transparency is held. That may involve decisions about:

- a. Clarity about MAC membership from each church
- b. MAC agendas and minutes
- c. Consultation meetings about significant issues
- d. Website use for the local church community
- e. MA newsletter/magazine
- f. Announcements in pew sheets & service notices: can't publicize everything happening in the whole MA, but the danger then is to publicize nothing. The MALT and MAC need to discuss and agree how to share enough mutually interesting and relevant information without oversharing.

3] TIMELINESS OF INVITATION – Try to avoid people being surprised by information about events in the very near future.

4] GOOD NEWS – make sure that everyone's good news – especially efforts and successes – is included and celebrated.

5] DIFFICULT NEWS – how do you communicate bad news? Rumour? Are there legal ramifications to consider? Would it be wise to seek diocesan guidance?

6] MINISTRY TEAM – there may well be a need to share pastoral information and concerns: therefore there will also be a need to guard against a temptation towards inappropriate gossip. The MALT needs to agree boundaries and offer supportive challenge in the maintenance of those boundaries.

B] External Communications

1] Know who you are and know your context:

- a. What makes the locality covered by your MA unique?
- b. What is your area known for?
- c. What are the needs in your community?
- d. Who is your audience?

2] Know what people are hoping for from Church:

- a. Social action (eg. Dementia, holiday hunger, advice, advocacy)
- b. Discipleship
- c. Spiritual growth
- d. Source of local unity

3] Know your channels

CHANNEL	Use
Website	One Source of Truth!
Social Media	Facebook Instagram YouTube Twitter
Digital Newsletter	Sway (free) MailChimp (free + paid) Church Suite (diocesan support for first year)
Print	Pew-sheet insert Ministry Area magazine
Google Maps	Update / maintain your Google Business Profile

4] Suggested content

- a. Sunday Gospel Discussion
- b. Prayerful Monday's Live
- c. How can we pray for you this week?
- d. This week's events
- e. What is...? Eg. What is a font? What is Candlemas?
- f. Monthly Stories of Faith
- g. RE in schools

5] Remember:



Stop the Scroll



Ask Questions



Like and respond



Be the community
you want to be
part of