

DEACONS AT END OF CURACY: a locally-supported post?

For many deacons, coming to the end of curacy is not an issue. Most are Self-Supporting Ministers (SSMs), living in their own houses, and expecting to continue to minister in their own communities.

However, this is not the case for everyone. Suppose a deacon wants to move at the end of a curacy? Suppose they are one of those very rare animals, a stipendiary deacon? What happens when you complete IME 2 and your paid curacy comes to an end?



Here is some practical information.

1. Deacons are normally treated in exactly the same way as any other SSM coming to the end of their curacy, ie, they have an end of year interview with the Bishop in which they discuss whether it is right to stay in the same post, or to move to a different post.
2. All training incumbents should arrange a service to mark the end of the curate's curacy - or at least to have an element of that in an existing service. Once the new post has been settled, either staying put or moving elsewhere, there will be a licensing service for the Deacon.

However, of course deacons are not the same as priest SSMs. There is usually a plethora of jobs open to priests, but very few for deacons. What happens then?

Be prepared to think creatively. If another stipendiary parish job is not available, what else could you do? It is worth starting to plan this early in the curacy. Get in touch with your Area Dean or Archdeacon and start the conversation.



1. **What else do you have an interest in?** Deacons are usually involved in different types of social care and marginal ministry, and sometimes a paid secular job comes up in those contexts that would suit you. I've recently come across the term '*bi-vocational*' - maybe this is a useful way to think about our ministry at the present time.
2. **Paid chaplaincy** (e.g. in a hospital) may be an option for some; that almost always involves employment in an institution rather than office-holding in a diocese. Or is your interest in education or a charity? **Be open-minded and prepared to explore.**
3. A tip from Canon Deacon Ann Turner (retired DDO York Province): "It is worth mentioning at annual reviews the **area of ministry that appeals to you.**
4. **If you want to stay in your present parish, talk things through with your incumbent.** You need to keep a connection with a church community, in order to maintain a sense of ministerial identity, and to encourage that church to think diaconally about the needs of the community.
5. If you don't want to stay with the same incumbent, then that needs to be part of your **end-of-curacy conversation** with your bishop. You may have your eye on another parish where you would like to serve: talk it through with him/her.
6. In theory, a diocesan part-stipendiary or house-for-duty appointment as associate minister would be open to a deacon, but in practice that would depend on whether presiding at Holy Communion on Sundays is an essential part of the role description as it usually is. **One practical suggestion in some cases might be for a PCC to fund a 'Locally Supported Post' for a deacon, just as some already choose to fund posts for locally employed lay ministers (e.g. youth or families workers). There are special procedures for the establishment of such a post in a parish, but it is legally possible to do so.**

We deacons need to be prepared to take initiatives in conversation with our diocesan officers, putting forward clear ideas, suggestions and alternatives. It

helps if we see this as an opportunity to do what deacons do best: develop new ways of thinking!



*With thanks for their input to Canon Becky Totterdell, DDO for Exeter diocese:
The Ven Douglas Dettmer, Archdeacon of Totnes: and Rev Deacon Corinne Smith,
deanery deacon, Isle of Wight, diocese of Portsmouth.*

(images from Teach Talks, Tiny Runner and Udemy blog)