Ministry Areas' Workshop #1

Ministry Area Council (MAC) responsibilities:
Trusteeship, Oversight, Accountability;
Purposefulness, Faithfulness.

A] Legal & Canonical

1 - MAC Member = Charity Trustee

1. Not universally recognised that all PCC members were technically Trustees of the charity that was their parish. The majority of parishes were 'excepted charities', ie were not required to register because annual turnover was below defined threshold. (Initial intention of Charity Commission was to require all parishes in England and Wales to register, regardless of turnover, but that requirement has now been deferred.) But the remainder of the roles and duties were the same.
2. **All MAs with combined annual income over £100k are required to register as Charities**. They are therefore now more open to scrutiny by the Charity Commission (CC), and so it's important that Trustees are aware of their obligations.
3. The good news is that the great majority of PCCs in the past have acted in accordance with the good principles of Trusteeship, so the need for change in practice need not be great.
   The guidance offered to MATTs prior to the formation of MAs will have complied with CC requirements.
4. The CC provides good range of accessible general advice, eg **CC3 The Essential Trustee.**

2 - Some of the Essential Duties of a Trustee

1. Ensure Trustees are eligible – including being on the Electoral Roll, not an undischarged bankrupt, or having unspent conviction for offences such as dishonesty.
2. Ensure the charity carries out its purposes for the public benefit. The promotion of the Christian faith is a legitimate public benefit.
3. Take the role seriously, eg by preparing adequately for and participating in Trustee meetings. **Decisions do not usually have to be unanimous, but once the trustees have made a decision, they must all comply with it, including any who disagree** (*jointly and severally*).
4. Don't rely unduly on one or a few individuals, as this increases risk.
5. Ensure funds are kept safe, including effective financial controls, protecting assets against theft or fraud. Expenditure on items that do not fall within the public benefit purposes is looked upon very dimly by the CC and the Courts…
6. Manage non-financial assets, eg property (land and buildings).
7. Make a Serious Incident Report (SIR) if required, eg upon discover of fraud, serious crime or safeguarding issue. The Trustees must manage consider and manage risks, eg financial, reputational for the whole MA.
8. Trustees must act with reasonably care and skill, and seek appropriate professional advice when needed.

3 - Governing Document

1. **The Governing Document for MAs is the Constitution of the Church in Wales, and specifically Chapter IV C** (www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/clergy-and-members/constitution). Gives information about matters of structure and governance, eg the role of the MAC, eligibility to stand for office and vote, etc., though uses term PCC rather than MAC.
2. Some of the Decrees that set up the MAs may contain complementary clauses, eg the make-up of the MACs, numbers of reps from constituent churches, etc. Where there is any conflict between documents, it is the CinW Constitution that takes precedence.

4 - Not Just My Church

1. A charity can have only one Trustee body, in our case the MAC. It is the MAC that is ultimately responsible for all the decisions and actions of the charity, for its finances and other resources, and for ensuring that its activities etc. support the stated aim of the charity.
2. **As members of the MAC, Trustees must act primarily for the good of the whole charity, and not for the interests of the particular church they might attend.**
   You represent the interests of the MA, not the interests of one congregation.
3. The Trustees are regarded as acting 'jointly and severally' – the decisions of the MAC are seen as being the decisions of each of the Trustees.
4. The Trustees may wish to accept input, advice, suggestions etc. from other bodies within the MA, eg Church Councils, but it does not have to.

5 - The MA Context

1. Legal structure: Unincorporated - doesn't have legal personality, so can't hold property or enter into contracts in its own name. Trustees' personal liability is unlimited.
   (NB – This is exactly the same as was the case for PCCs.)
2. Be familiar with role of MAC as laid out in Constitution, including its strategic function.
3. Understand who is automatically *ex officio* - Lay Chair (N); Readers (N); LLM (Y);
   or co-opted: Treasurer (Y); Secretary (Y); Readers (Y); up to seven additional clergy or lay who are not *ex officio*.
4. Ensure adequate Public Liability insurance is in place.
5. Be strategic. Ask questions such as: where are we now as an MA? Where would we like our MA to be in X years' time?
   It's not just about repairing the gutter or deciding on the date of the Fete…
6. Formally adopt and become familiar with current CinW Safeguarding Policy. Include Safeguarding and H&S on each MAC Agenda.
7. **Ensure appropriate people complete online Safeguarding training – including all MAC members.**
   It is the MAC's responsibility for ensuring that children and adults who are vulnerable are not put at risk.
8. Devise other **policies**, eg GDPR/Privacy (eg display Charity Number on public documents), H&S (with associated Risk Assessments, including for Covid19), Fire Safety, First Aid, Digital Safety & Social Media, Reserves, Complaints Process, Risk (financial, reputational, etc.)…
9. Guidance: Draw up Budget, and publicise it.
10. Identify conflicts of interest annually, and update against the Agenda of each meeting.
11. When the Charity is registered update the records of Trustees each year, and upload Annual Report. Keep up to date with any other CC requirements.
12. Submit Annual Reports to the CC.
13. If you are employers ensure compliance with Employment Law, maintaining or contracting out payroll, pensions etc., providing appropriate contracts…

B] Faith & Purpose

1 – The Ministry Area Council should seek God's guidance in its work.
The MAC holds legal and fiscal responsibilities, but it is not simply a legal entity. It is a team of disciples, called to a holy purpose, sharing in the love of Christ and acting in the power of the Holy Spirit. Limit the time that must inevitably be spent on things like bills and drainpipes.
Pray together about the issues you face, share the Word and Sacraments and rejoice together when you notice God at work in your midst.

2 – A Ministry Area Council is its own community, with the needs of a community.
Members will hopefully be varied in their outlook, skills, experiences and hopes: that variety is a necessary element for a flourishing MAC. But there is a need also to find a common ground and sense of purpose, in which the spiritual life of each member and of the group as a whole is recognized as important. Fundamental to the success of a Ministry Area Council is the shared identity of a group of individuals called together by God to the work of the Church, for a season. Each time there is a change of membership, then the shape and nature of the MAC community is changed, and needs to consider the ways in which a new community has been formed.

3 – The Ministry Area Council should have its own marks of identity.
Community does not happen by accident. There will be times when the MAC has to make difficult decisions or navigate times of contention or disagreement: build up your concrete recognition of each other as a community of fellow-disciples, so that you can manage the tough things together. Make sure that the MAC has its own holy habits (how does your identity as a group of *Christian* leaders manifest itself?) which give strength, definition and continuity to the group, and are not merely perfunctory tokens. Take care to party together: celebrate just being together as well as the things that go well (eg. you might have a whole day together each spring, a BBQ together in the summer and a meal together for Advent / Christmas).

4 – The Ministry Area Council is not simply a body of representatives.
Thinking of MAC membership as composed of one person representing St Blodwin's, another representing St Teilo's, another representing young people, etc., will not be the most fruitful approach: members will quickly imagine themselves to be competing against each other for finite resources, attention or prestige. The MAC, with the Ministry Team, are seeking to discern the holy calling of the Church community in this place, and have oversight of the Church's response to that calling. MAC members may well want to take the trouble to get the feel of the several communities for which they hold responsibility together.

5 – Each Ministry Area Council must determine its own vision, mission and aims.
A MAC needs to be intentional about its agenda and activity, and avoid getting into a rut of rubber-stamping the same reactive agenda year after year. There are several different 'models' to help a MAC shape its agenda, (eg: 5G: Go, Gather, Generous, Give, Grow). Whatever model (if any) is chosen, the vision of a MAC always needs to be deliberate and dynamic: it isn't possible to pick a programme off a shelf, or to assume that the vision formed in previous years is set in stone forever.

6 – Partners in Mission
A Ministry Area Council acts in partnership with the Ministry Team. The MAC, the Ministry Team,

and the Ministry Area Leadership Team will have several members in common. The different groups have different roles, but they need to share in a common endeavour. The ministers (clergy and lay) are not simply the officers of the church hired to execute the mandate of the MAC as 'board of directors': the Ministry Area Leader, Vicars and other ministers are mutual partners with the Ministry Area Council in a shared mission.

7 – Faith, Hope and Love

The Ministry Area Council is a means by which we hold each other accountable in love as Christian leaders. Good leaders set an example, and membership of a Ministry Area Council is a form of leadership. When a MAC determines to adopt a particular policy or activity, MAC members need to be, and be seen to be, contributing to that policy or activity. Is the MAC experimenting with something new? - MAC members need to try it out, and let that contribution be more than a mere token.