

# St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese: Qualities and Responsibilities of Incumbent leader

*(incumbent status clergy, stipendiary or self-supporting)*

## Purpose

The Incumbent is the focus for the *vision, unity, and transformation* of the benefice<sup>1</sup>, discerning & articulating a common vision and determining the theological priorities that underpin a variety of missionary outward focused congregations witnessing and serving all.

Their focus is on bringing people of all ages to baptism, so they follow Jesus confidently and live out their baptismal vows in every sphere of life. The Incumbent does so through delegated oversight to ordained and lay colleagues modelling servant leadership. Together they determine a sustainable rhythm of worship and pattern of intentional missional engagement appropriate for the tradition and mission context both within the benefice and in partnership with others. There will be a mix of existing and new congregations, sharing common goals and values.

## Qualities

**Discerning** – continually open to God's mission in the context in which they serve and foster God's gifting of the people they encounter. They are prayerful, spirit filled and seeking personally to live after the pattern of Christ with godly wisdom. *They continually watch for the signs of God's new creation.*

**Empathic** – good understanding of others, aware of their own emotional language<sup>2</sup> and demonstrating pastoral sensitivity and robustness. They model healthy Christian relationships and open communication.

**Enabling** others of all ages and diverse backgrounds as they focus on the abundance of God in celebrating and using the gifts God has given in their people, rather than perpetuate a 'deficit' culture. They willingly give life away by their own example seeking to open opportunities rather than closing down options. They provide a supportive framework in exercising appropriate authority and sharing mutual accountability.

**Equipping** – apt to teach in relevant and appropriate ways both in word and deed keeping theologically sustained, continually stretched and engaged in experiential learning and reflective practice. They are constantly curious especially in adapting to a growing context.

**Inspiring** – in public engagement especially in their preaching and championing the need to challenge for the sake of the weak, poor and those in need. They can produce more in others through their enthusiasm generating energy that creates momentum and promote innovation and experimentation.

**Honest** – accurately self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They actively share leadership with others in both areas the Incumbent is gifted, as well as areas where they are not gifted. They are appropriately vulnerable and able to demonstrate their willingness to learn and reflect and share personally in suitable contexts.

## Responsibilities

- **Discern & Implement Vision and Strategy:** Utilise the Growing in God resources to create a rhythm of mission appropriate to the variety of missionary congregations to foster growth in number, depth, influence and younger. They will enable the whole church to continually discern<sup>2</sup> God's mission appropriate for the context and next stage of the 'story' of the congregations<sup>3</sup>. This will include considering opportunities for experimentation including church planting & fresh expressions.
- **Create & support a ministry team.** The Incumbent will exercise an 'oversight' role releasing potential for mission for the benefit of all ages alongside engaging directly in ministry themselves. The team may include paid and voluntary roles including, curates, SSMs, commissioned and licensed ministers alongside churchwardens, treasurers, etc. Each minister will continue to learn & reflect and actively promote vocations. Team members may act in a Local Ministry Role for a defined period for a discrete congregation in a benefice.
- **Develop Worship Services:** With colleagues advance a range of high-quality services of worship across the benefice appropriate to different contexts, traditions of a style & time that best serves the local community. Create a culture of innovation and welcome accessible to all including children, young people, and their families. Encourage the experimenting of new forms of worship services appropriate to the gifting of the wider ministry team and to serve those not currently attracted.
- **Lead in Mission:** Intentionally promote discipleship pathways across the benefice for all people groups including children and young people so there is opportunity to explore and commit to following Jesus Christ. Encourage each baptised person to be a confident witness in every part of their lives, discerning & discovering God's purpose for their lives. Enable each member to serve their local church community with acts of service and demonstrate healthy relationships.
- **Provide a lead on making a difference in wider society:** Encourage good relationships with schools, local councils, voluntary organisations, health and social care services and environmental groups. They will encourage community engagement in partnership with others especially with the poor, marginalised and sick. Encourage the prophetic role of the church and take seriously the voice of children and young people.
- **Establish sustainable financial resourcing & appropriate governance structures to promote the mission and ministry of the Benefice.** With church wardens and treasurers advocate stewardship through teaching and best practice so the mission of the Church is sustainable. Where possible delegate to lay chairs or amalgamate PCC's using the tools provided by the benefice act.
- **Improve church buildings as needed to for the public witness to the Gospel.** With church wardens maintain a balance between the present worship

### Footnotes

1) Steven Croft 'Ministry in Three Dimensions' (Darton Longman & Todd 1999) p154f

2) David Heywood in *Reimagining Ministerial Formation* advocates training in the basic competencies of emotional intelligence.

3) <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/ministry/common-worship-ordination-0>

4) Patrick Keifert 'We are here now – A Missional Journey of Spiritual Discovery' (Allelon Publishing 2006) p17

5) James Hopwell 'Congregation Stories and Structures' (Fortress Press. 1987)

needs of existing and future congregations with their wider use for the benefit of the whole community as a place of prayer and practical community engagement.

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