Working Agreement for an ordained self-supporting minister (OSSM)

Name of minister:

Name of parish/ benefice:

Agreement date:

Date of next review:

Working agreement

1. Context for ministry

Revd <NAME> (use full name here and then first name elsewhere in this document) serves as [Honorary] Associate Priest/Minister/ (insert alternative role title as appropriate), licensed to [Parish/ Benefice] on DATE.

<NAME’s> principal role is one of support to the benefice in its mission and ministry, working in partnership with Revd INCUMBENT <NAME> (use full name here and then first name elsewhere in this document), Rector/Vicar, etc. of [Parish/ Benefice] to achieve those missional and ministry aims.

1. Contact

<NAME> can be contacted regarding benefice matters on (telephone number).   
[Discuss whether mobile, landline or both.]

1. Focus of ministry

[A description of the OSSM’s main focus of ministry. In a parish or benefice context? As an expression of local shared ministry? In the community? At work? Where the OSSM also operates as a Minister in Secular Employment (MSE) then add details as is felt helpful. This may need one or two paragraphs.]

1. Broader context

[Description of the OSSM’s non-church based work and other wider life commitments e.g. elder or family care, other salaried, freelance or pro-bono employment and voluntary roles.]

<NAME> and <INCUMBENT NAME> will attempt to be flexible around both parish/benefice commitments and <NAME’s> other responsibilities. There may be a reference to typical hours worked or committed elsewhere per week.

1. Wider church responsibilities

[List any church roles and responsibilities held outside the parish/benefice, e.g. deanery, archdeaconry or diocesan roles and work undertaken for national church organisations.]

1. Special responsibilities within the parish/benefice

<NAME> will have particular responsibility for [specify any particular responsibilities e.g. mission/ministry planning, organisation of study groups, administrative tasks, schools work, involvement in the local community, pastoral support, etc. Conversely, if there are none, it will be useful to note this.]

1. Time commitment within the parish/benefice

[An OSSM’s time spent on parish/benefice duties will include time for leading worship, taking occasional offices (including preparation and follow-up), meetings, reading, prayer and sermon preparation. Retreat and time for meeting a spiritual director/companion should be included. Time spent within the parish/benefice needs to take account of special responsibilities, wider church responsibilities, and the OSSM’s commitments outside the faith community - see above 4 and 5). It is worth thinking through the practicality, need or desirability of attending every PCC – see 10 below.]

NAME will offer, on average:

* XX hours per week to the parish/benefice. [It has been found helpful to think of a day as consisting of three sessions – morning, afternoon and evening. A working day comprises any two sessions which may be split across two different days if that suits the OSSM’s wider responsibilities.]
* XX Sundays per month/term where s/he will be leading worship.
* NAME will preach approximately XX times a month/term at Sunday services.
* [If applicable] Approximately XX additional services each month/term (maybe including midweek services).
* Up to approximately XX funerals per year, XX weddings per year, plus XX baptisms per year. (It is generally useful to specify whether and how far the OSSM will be involved in receiving bookings and handling paperwork for occasional offices.)
* Refer to or exclude additional expectations e.g. daily offices on ‘duty’ days.
* Where relevant, it is helpful to highlight times and periods during the year when ministry availability may be reduced or increased. Reasons might include seasonal farming commitments, term-time related employment or child-care during school holiday periods. (The principle is to identify at the outset of an agreement what factors might affect availability either way for the sake of clarity and realistic, mutually held expectations.)
* NAME recognises the duty on the OSSM to attend to their own spiritual discipline of Bible reading and prayer.

1. Time off

NAME’S ministry days for all their responsibilities are generally Sunday and …. equating to NUMBER sessions each of about four hours. NAME will take [8] weeks' holiday a year from their other employment including bank holidays. INCUMBENT and s/he will negotiate about service cover in the usual way with planning at least a quarter in advance and more generally six months ahead.

[The WA will take precedence concerning these matters over the way they are addressed in the current Statement of Particulars. Advance planning is probably more critical generally than for a full-time stipendiary colleague particularly for those OSSMs with other external responsibilities. NAME will/will not be generally available to provide holiday cover. The INCUMBENT and s/he will work as closely as is practical to coordinate holiday dates to give a certain amount of resilience.]

NAME’s usual rest day(s) from other commitments and ministry responsibilities is/are… Except in an emergency, that period of rest [e.g. from 6pm the evening before to 8am the day after] should be respected by the parish/benefice and incumbent].

NAME will regularly undertake activities (exercise, hobbies, recreational activity) to care for the whole person.

[Naming this is for the benefit of both incumbent and OSSM recognising such time spent as an authentic element of discipleship and ministry.]

1. Meetings with the incumbent

NAME and INCUMBENT NAME will meet:

a) As necessary by Zoom, phone or in person to deal with administrative or urgent matters.

b) About [bi-monthly] in person to provide mutual support, opportunities for personal review and growth, and theological reflection.

1. Ministry team and other meetings.

As a licensed OSSM minister/priest (amend as necessary) NAME is a full member of the PCC/ all PCCs within the parish/benefice (amend as necessary).

NAME will attend meetings as follows.

* NAME will/will not generally attend Ministry Team meetings and meetings of (DETAILS) when s/he is available.
* Either:
  + NAME will attend PCC, Deanery Chapter and Deanery Synod meetings on an occasional basis/ specify agreed attendance as is practical.  
    or
  + In general terms NAME proposes to attend parish/benefice meetings where their attendance is particularly relevant rather than attending on a routine, ex officio basis.

1. Pastoral work

Either: Although NAME has limited availability for pastoral work and visits, s/he recognises that specific pastoral needs or staffing availability will on occasions mean undertaking work of this nature such as home communions or end of life pastoral care. Since such work can often be time-consuming, this will be subject to regular review.

Or, a distinct part of NAME’s calling includes pastoral work as a major feature of their ministry which will affect their availability for other sorts of ministry.

1. Confidentiality

NAME will indicate to congregation members that, unless express agreement is made to the contrary, all matters disclosed to him/her during the course of their duties may be disclosed to INCUMBENT NAME.

[This may include the Area Dean or Archdeacon in certain circumstances, for example to cover those situations where the incumbent is implicated in the subject of the disclosure or during a vacancy.]

1. Office space/secretarial support/resources

NAME will have access to (specify office space, secretarial support, etc. available).

1. Clerical dress – everyday and liturgical.

Normal liturgical dress for Eucharistic services is Alb and Stole/ Cassock and Surplice with scarf/stole/ Clerical collar/ Smart casual (specify details). NAME generally will/ will not wear a clerical collar when leading worship and (as locally agreed). Out in the parish/benefice, typical dress will be collar/ smart casual [delete as appropriate.]

1. Representing the incumbent

NAME understands that there may be instances where s/he is asked to represent or stand in for INCUMBENT NAME at meetings (specify detail as necessary).

1. Expenses

NAME will claim travel expenses in a manner that suits local arrangements from the PCC Treasurer who has responsibility for the parish/benefice finances. Relevant car travel will be reimbursed at the current diocesan rate per mile. PCCs will be made aware of expenses in the usual way when accounts are scrutinised. [Where negotiated] when travelling from home to parish/benefice, each session will be reimbursed at the rate of one return journey at the usual diocesan rate.

1. Payment of fees

As a Self-Supporting Minister, NAME understands that their ministry is unpaid. NAME notes that in the diocese of Bath and Wells licensed OSSMs or OSSM PTOs are not generally currently entitled to receive fees for services, including occasional offices. This remains the case during a vacancy.

1. Time for Ministerial Formation/ Continuing Professional Development

NAME recognises their need to take responsibility to seek opportunities for continuing professional development, supported by INCUMBENT NAME and the local church community. Plans for the next 12 months will include (provide details here, possibly based on a recent Ministerial Development Review (MDR).   
[These plans need to be realistic in terms of time and will sometimes mean that other parish/benefice duties have to be put aside temporarily to achieve them.]

S/he plans to allocate X days per quarter/year for learning events, ministerial formation and/ or study. S/he plans to make a private retreat at least once a year. The parish/benefice will meet the whole costs/ travel costs/ contribute 50% of the entire costs of an annual retreat of three/four days/nights.   
[Specifying this unambiguously allows the parish/benefice to express a tangible appreciation of the ministry offered freely by the OSSM.]

1. Ministerial support

Specify what arrangements are in place for the OSSM in terms of mentoring, coaching, and other forms of professional support. It may be helpful to note that the OSSM has a Spiritual Director, Spiritual Companion or some similar spiritual supporter [see factoring in the time commitment at 7 above. However, it is inappropriate to specify further details in a Working Agreement.]

1. Grievance procedure

NAME and INCUMBENT NAME agree that any misunderstandings and/or grievances they experience will be discussed in private and not in public. NAME should be free to contribute openly and with integrity to discussions within the parish/benefice. A thriving parish/benefice is likely one where mutual honour and respect is clearly valued and demonstrated between the incumbent, the OSSM and church officers. NAME and INCUMBENT NAME therefore agree to support each other publicly but maintain their individual viewpoints and contributions. If any an issue cannot be resolved and is too fundamental for colleagues simply to agree to differ, then advice should be sought from the Archdeacon or Suffragan Bishop. The current diocesan clergy guidelines may be found here: [bathandwells.org.uk/diocesan-guidelines-for-clergy](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/ministry/clergy/diocesan-guidelines-for-clergy/)

1. Review of this document

[It is suggested that a new Working Agreement should be reviewed after 6 months, and afterwards every 12 months or so may be appropriate. The Agreement should be reviewed where there is any significant change in circumstances (e.g. changes in personnel, unpredicted work pressures, health issues). The Bishop’s Adviser for OSSM in each archdeaconry is available for advice or to join conversations between the incumbent and OSSM about shaping or reviewing a realistic and workable agreement. Initial agreements may need to be tempered by the reality of what a six or twelve-month period has shown to be achievable. The next review date is indicated at the top of this document.]

Signed

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| Name: Revd [OSSM]  Title:  Date: | Name: Revd [Incumbent]  Title:  Date: |