



COMMISSION HANDBOOK

DOCUMENT CHANGE CONTROL

Document Version	4.2
Updated after the Commission meeting on	25 Feb 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to describe

- Why the Justice & Peace Commission exists
- How it is structured
- How we go about our work.

Two key reasons for having a document like this are:-

- Transparency – to ensure that anyone can understand how we go about our work
- We operate to a 'service model' – viewing all the things that we do as 'services'. As this way of working is not so commonplace outside of some commercial organisations, this document helps to explain how it works for the Commission

Why does the commission exist?

Working for Justice is a fundamental part of being a Catholic Christian. The main purposes for having the Justice & Peace Commission are as follows:-

- To celebrate and share the social justice activity that goes on in parishes across the Diocese of Leeds
- To promote thinking and lay leadership about Catholic Social Thought within the Diocese of Leeds
- To promote awareness, discussion and action throughout the Leeds Diocese about the 'just' Gospel response to current key issues of social justice
- We are a "Commission" - officially appointed by the Bishop to serve the Diocese and advise the Bishop of Leeds on matters of Social Justice

How is the commission structured?

The Commission consists of a group of between 12-20 parishioners and others from across the Diocese of Leeds.

The Commission, typically, meets 4 times per year to review progress on its activities and to plan activities and projects to be taken forward in future months.

So that work can continue smoothly between Commission meetings, there is also a **Commission Executive** that meets between full Commission meetings.

There is also an ad hoc **Finance Working Group** to assist the Treasurer in budgeting the Commission's activities and ensuring that we match our proposed activities with our funding. Fundraising and managing the development of project proposals to submit to trusts and foundations for funding is a key part of the work of this group. As such, the membership of this group is fluid and will change. People will be seconded to this group, for instance, for the develop of specific project proposals.



At any point in time there are also a number of 'live' projects. Each of these is managed by a **Project Steering Groups**. This group directs the work of that project and reports back to the full Commission on progress and any issues or risks that it cannot deal with itself. Project Steering groups are typically 3-5 people. There will be a minimum of two Commission members on each Project Steering Group. Other people can be co-opted onto the Project Steering Group because of their interest or knowledge in relation to specific projects.

To promote the development of projects and other ideas for action, we also have a set of **Issue Action Groups**. As the name suggests, this is a group of people (which would include at least 2 Commission members) who focus on specific issues such as Climate Change or UK Poverty. A key part of their remit is to come up with project ideas that. Once approved by the Commission, they either go ahead as we have sufficient funding to carry them out or further work is undertaken to seek funding for the project. Issue Action Groups decide for themselves when they meet but report back to the Commission on the key discussion points and ideas for actions and projects.

Across the Diocese of Leeds there are also individual supporters of the work of the Justice & Peace Commission. We always welcome their input. The meetings of the Commission are advertised on our website and anyone in the Diocese is entitled to ask to join a full Commission meeting.

We also have **volunteer** support who undertake specific activities. Commission members themselves are volunteers, as are others who are members of Project Steering Groups or Issue Action Groups. Any aspect of the Commission's activities could be done by volunteers with the relevant skills and experience.

Where we have sufficient funding, we will use **service providers** to deliver some of our activities. In recent years we have used paid service providers to project manage significant projects (SPARK Social Justice), provide admin support to Commission meetings, manage the production of newsletters, keep the content of our website and social media presence updated etc. The number of hours of paid service provision can be flexed according to the financial resources available to us. Equally, we can use different service providers to provide the quite different services we require – for instance, it would be unusual to find that one person could keep our website software updated whilst also being able to manage the work of a project.

The table below explains these different groups in more detail:



GROUP ROLES	RESPONSIBILITIES	WHO IS IN THIS GROUP?
Commission Members Meets approximately every 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deciding the priority social justice issues that the Commission should address• Deciding which projects the Commission should undertake or seek funding for• Approving the financial reports & approving the fundraising strategy of the Commission• Commit to attend 3 Commission meetings per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anyone can come to an individual full Commission meeting• Anyone in the Leeds Diocese can apply to become a member of the Commission itself.• New members are approved by the Commission Executive
Commission Executive Meets as required in between full Commission Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make the day to day decisions needed to ensure our activities all happen as planned• Make decisions about resource allocation and responding to issues and opportunities between Commission meetings• Responsible for the financial management of the Commission's activities• Attend all full Commission meetings plus 3 Executive meetings• Approve all applications to join the Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chair of the Commission• Vice Chair of the Commission• Treasurer• Representatives of Project Working Parties where decisions are needed from the Executive?• 3 others from the Commission or co-opted because of their relevant interests or skills
Project Steering Group Members Meet as directed by the needs of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct the activities of a specific project• Actively assist in the development of the project's activities• Direct the work of any service providers who are doing some of the project work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commission members who express an interest in managing a specific project.• J&P supporters who express an interest can be co-opted onto a Project Steering Group



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resolve issues with any service providers or raise the matter with the Commission Executive for resolution	
Finance Working Party Members <i>Meet as required</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Devise a fund-raising strategy to support the work of the Commission and have this approved by the Commission• Select funding sources and develop applications for funding to support projects• Direct fundraising efforts among the J&P supporter base	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chair,• Treasurer plus• 3 other Commission members or people co-opted because of their experience in this area
Issue Action Groups <i>Meet as agreed within each group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide Subject Matter Expertise to the Commission on specific issues of Social Justice or in relation to Catholic Social Teaching or in relation to specific sorts of activities. This could range from theological expertise to expertise in 'green' technologies.• Develop project ideas for approval by the Commission• Devise other ideas for action (e.g. newsletter articles/social media campaigns) in relation to their specific issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Issue Action Groups will have at least one Commission member• Other members may be J&P supporters or people from other social justice networks within the Leeds Diocese where our interests overlap



J&P Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertakes specific activities in support of the work of the Commission. The extent of the responsibility is agreed with each individual volunteer or is agreed through a Volunteer Role Description.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anyone with the relevant skills and experience who is willing to complete specific J&P activities
J&P Supporter Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote reflection and action on issues of Social Justice in their local situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All diocesan clergy and religious• Members of parish or school/college J&P groups• All the individuals on the J&P email distribution list
Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide specific, paid, services to the Commission.• Where the service provided is for an ongoing activity of the Commission (e.g. editing and distributing the newsletter or keeping the website updated) then payment will be made on the number of hours worked.• For larger projects, payments may be milestone-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any self-employed person or organisation that can provide the services we need in a cost-effective manner



How do we go about our work?

What core principles underlie the way we work?

- Transparency – we work in an open way.
- We recognise the value of volunteers.
- We will offer ‘just’ compensation for any activities carried out by service providers
- Insofar as we are able, all events organised by the Commission will be advertised as ‘Free to Attend’ with a voluntary collection taken to help defray expenses. Some online events may be advertised as ‘donation’ which may also mean a minimum contribution of £1 towards the cost of the event.

How we work

Constraints

The Commission has very limited regular sources of funding. This is the single largest constraint on the work of the Commission.

Additionally, it is constrained by the time and capacity of any volunteers (both members of the Commission itself and other volunteers) to support the activities that the Commission wishes to undertake.

These constraints have been an important influence on how we have decided to organise our work.

approach

A ‘service-based’ organisation

The work that the Commission does can be viewed as a series of ‘services’. Some of these are internal to the organisation itself (such as the provision of ‘financial administration’ services) whilst most would be outward-facing services – the Commission trying to fulfil the need for reflection, advocacy, awareness-raising or campaigning on a particular Social Justice issue in the light of Catholic Social Teaching.

In previous years all of the services were provided by a full-time worker for the Commission, employed through the Diocese. However, financial constraints have removed this option as a way of delivering services. Consequently, we must recognise more explicitly the service basis for our activities and seek both paid and unpaid (volunteer) service providers to deliver these services, within the financial resources available to the Commission at any point in time.

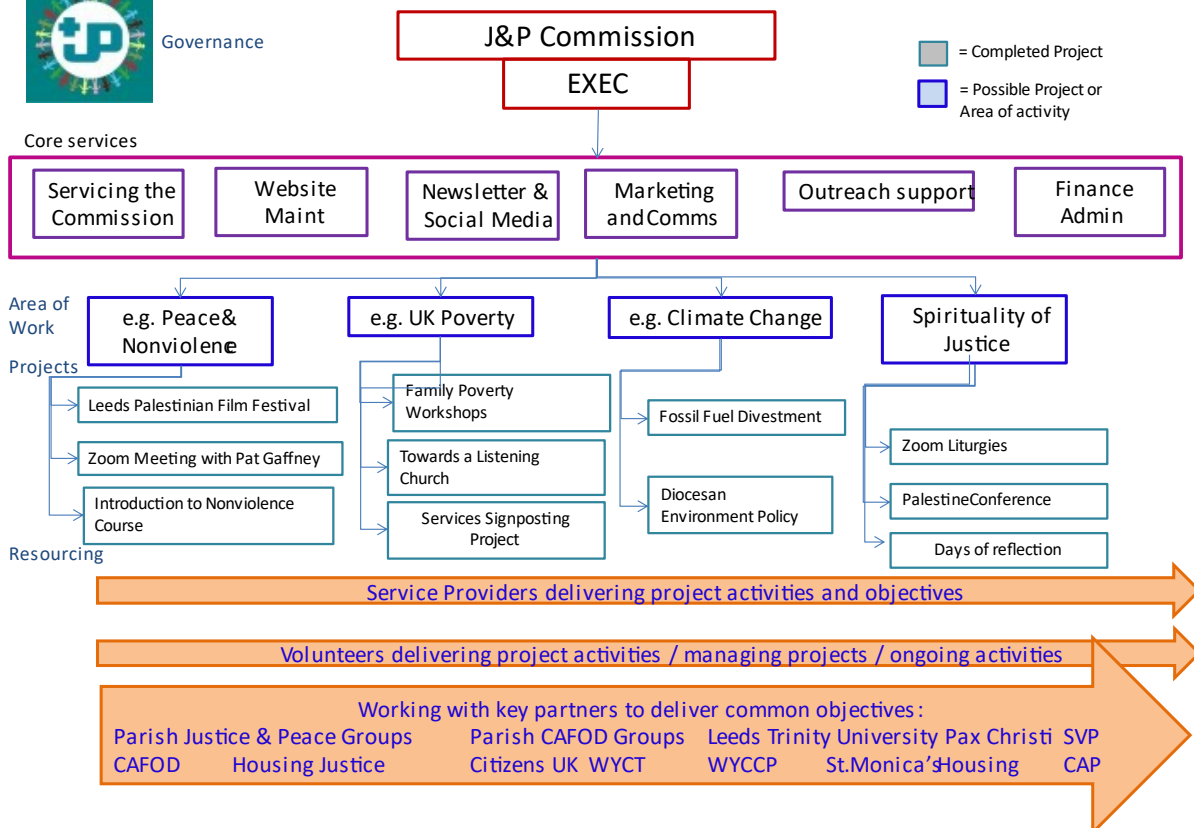
We will offer hourly or daily rates to service providers that reflect the nature of the services to be provided. At the very least we will offer rates that equate to the current level of the ‘Living Wage’.

People who volunteer their services to the Commission are entitled to claim any necessary expenses incurred in carrying out activities (such as travel expenses).

This (and more) is illustrated in the diagram below.



Diocese of Leeds Justice & Peace Commission : Structure and Activities



The 'core services' section of the diagram is concerned with the basic ongoing activity that the Commission needs to undertake to maintain its existence: -

'Servicing the Commission' comprises sending out agendas, papers etc. in preparation for Commission meetings and writing up minutes afterwards so that key decisions and action points are recorded.

'Website Maintenance' is the ongoing work to keep the Commission's website up to date, along with consistently posting to the Commission's social media presence.

Newsletter comprises work to edit, and layout a regular newsletter and distribute it via email and the Commission's Facebook page. It could also involve writing articles for the Newsletter.

Marketing and Comms includes other communications the Commission might want to make to its supporter database as well as the promotion and development of marketing resources for any Commission (or Commission supported) events that are not covered in other ways. It also covers maintaining the supporter contact database.

Working with key partners covers any work undertaken –such as ongoing support from Commission members to St.Monica's Housing, CAFOD or the West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project as well as opportunities that arise to support key campaigns that align with the Commission's priorities.



Finance Admin covers the book-keeping activity needed to keep accurate records of income and expenditure as well as all activities to raise the funding needed to carry out its work.

All the above services need to be provided whatever priorities the Commission sets. These are ongoing – they have no beginning and no end. Everything else that the Commission undertakes can be considered as a project.

the commission is also a project-based organisation

Each of the boxes under the 'Area of Work' are labelled as '**Projects**'. The key elements of a project are that they have defined objectives and have a start and an end date. The projects that the Commission undertakes will be in line with its identified priorities – which will change over time.

Projects will differ widely in their need for resources. It may be possible to undertake some small projects entirely by using volunteers. Other projects may necessitate spending significant amounts of money. By having a project-based organisation the Commission can expand or contract its activities in line with the monetary and volunteer resource available to it.

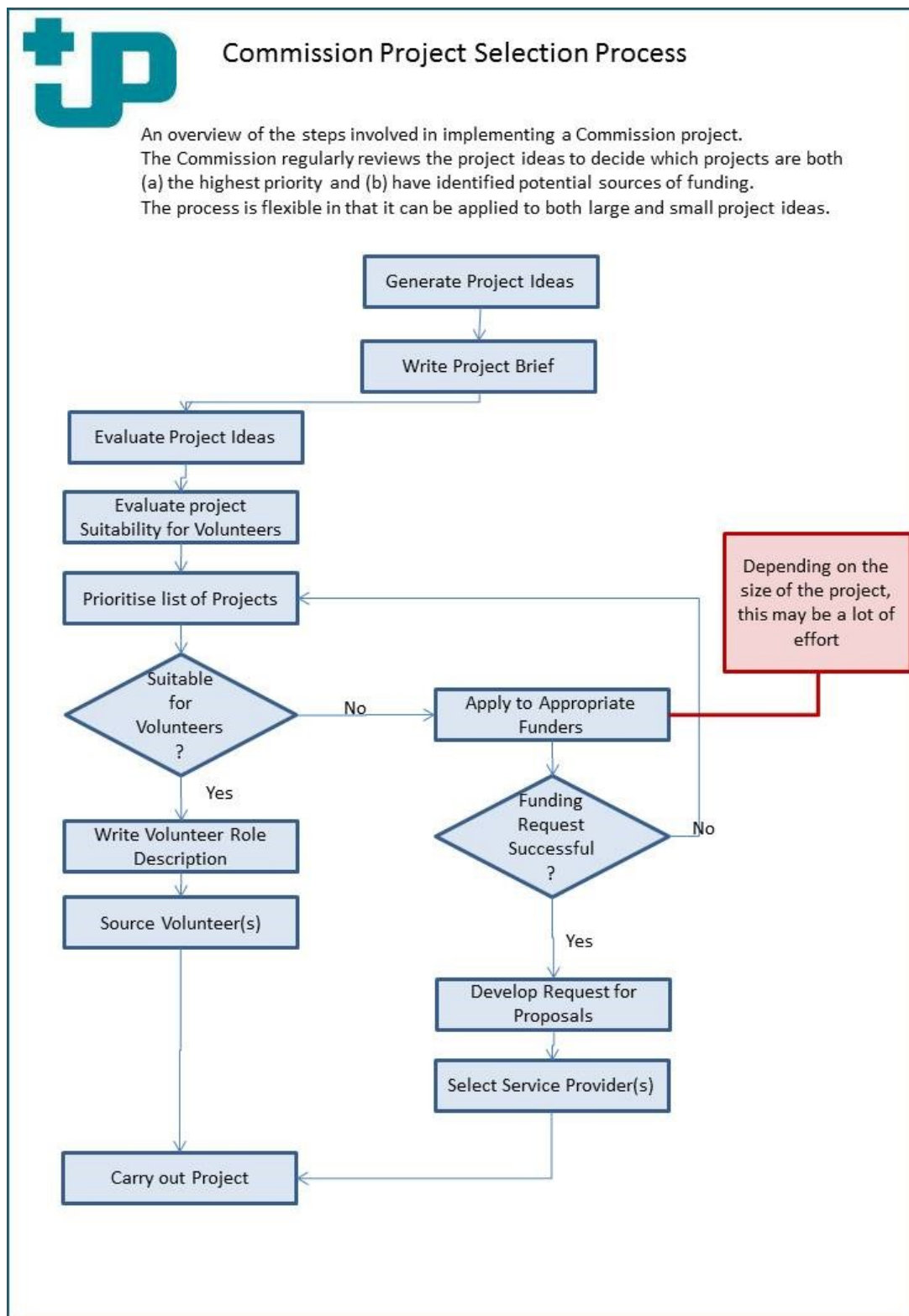
project selection process

Anyone in the Commission, or supporters of the Commission, may come up with an idea for a project. A key role of the Commission is the evaluation of project ideas to decide which ones should be taken forward. The Commission will then apply to funding bodies for priority projects that involve significant spend.

In general terms, the project evaluation process is shown in the diagram below. This just shows the steps that the Commission will go through in deciding whether or not to proceed with a project. For a large project there may be a large number of intermediate steps. For instance, the Commission may decide to use the services of a fund-raiser to assist in applying for significant amounts of funding where there is a complex application process. Although there may be a number of intermediate steps for some projects, this approach to project selection can be applied to all projects.

For all projects, whatever the source of the idea, a 'Project Brief' will be written by the person proposing the idea. This will be a short (not more than two pages) document with a standard set of headings that will provide everyone on the Commission with a basic understanding of the project, why it should be done and what resources it will need. The Commission will regularly review project ideas and make decisions about what projects have the highest priority. The basis for the evaluation will be

1. The current priorities of the Commission
2. An evaluation of the possible impact of the project viewed against the ease (or difficulty) of doing the project



If it is possible to do a project entirely with volunteer resource then the project can proceed to the next step immediately. This next step is to source suitable volunteers and then carry out the activities of the project.



Where a project requires external funding then applications will be made to suitable funding organisations – and this may be a very significant task. Funding organisations are all different and have differing requirements for those applying for support.

[WORKING WITH AND SELECTING service providers](#)

For some complex projects a **'Request for Proposal'** will be prepared and issued to interested parties. This is a description of the services that the Commission needs to be provided to deliver the objectives of the project. The services may be undertaken by individuals who are self-employed service providers or by organisations that provide relevant services.

Service Providers will then submit their proposals for the project. These proposals will then be evaluated by the Commission in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria that will be included in the Request for Proposal.

The Commission will contract with selected Service Providers to deliver the services needed to achieve the project objectives.

For simpler projects, some **Terms of Reference** may be sufficient to define the work well-enough for service providers to understand estimate the amount of work, agree to it and undertake the work.

[partnership working](#)

Wherever possible, the Commission will seek to leverage the impact of its activities by partnering with other organisations.

At a formal level, the Commission might work with partner organisations – where they directly provide services to a Commission project, for example.

At an informal level, the Commission may use the campaigns of other organisations and organise events around them.

For instance, the Commission has both developed its own events around 'Laudato Si' by partnering with *Global Justice Now* and by working with CAFOD. The 2021 Introduction to Nonviolence course, on the other hand, has been done in partnership with the Pax Christi group in the Leeds Diocese. The Commission has provided the marketing and admin for the course and the sessions have been delivered by members of the Pax Christi in the Leeds diocese group

[we are a learning organisation](#)

We want to get better at what we do. As an organisation we are committed to doing this through evaluating all projects. The larger the project the larger (and more formal) the effort that will go into evaluation of the achievement of objectives and the impact that the project has had.

Any project that requires a material amount of effort will have an Evaluation Report produced at the end of the project so that any learnings can be incorporated into both the project evaluation process and the project management process.

*** END OF DOCUMENT ***