Dear X and X,

Re: Discerning future ministry resource for the parish/benefice of XXXXXXXXXXX

Following the announcement of the departure of XXXXXXXXXXXXX, I am writing to outline the process that will follow as we work together to discern future ministry resource for your parish/benefice.

As you are aware, the diocese is no longer able to provide stipendiary ministers in parishes whose share contribution does not cover their ministry cost. Your parish paid XXX in share in 20XX. That was XXX short of your ministry cost. The enclosed information sheet shows how this figure is calculated. This includes the subsidy we do receive from the national Church for low income communities. However, unlike in the past, we do not receive any other subsidy. The cost of paying of the clergy must now be met by the parishes and Mission and Ministry Units (MMUs) where the clergy serve. There is no viable alternative.

If the parish is able to find this additional money and demonstrate its ability to pay this each year, then we can look again at the appointment of a stipendiary priest. Otherwise we will have to explore other options for ministry in the parish.

The costs of ministry in 2020 are as follows:

- A stipendiary priest will cost [insert figure per annum]
- A ‘half-time’ stipendiary priest [insert figure per annum]
- A House for Duty priest [insert figure per annum]
- A self-supporting Minister [insert figure per annum]

In order to help me discern with you the most appropriate resource for your next appointment, I shall be asking my PA to be in touch to arrange a meeting with you as churchwardens in the next 4-6 weeks. Our conversation (for which we should allow about one and a half hours) will be wide-ranging, but as well as looking at what the parish is able to afford, we will focus on these other key areas that contribute to the overall health of the church. I am keen to hear about your strategy and vision in relation to these areas of church life as well as what is currently going on. I should be grateful if you would kindly think about these in advance of our meeting:

- Ministerial vitality (do we need to unpack these headings further in advance of a meeting?)
- Missional activity
- Financial viability
- Strength of Governance
Please come prepared also to tell me about any particular contextual factors which should be borne in mind (e.g. areas of new housing; pockets of deprivation; particular church tradition etc).

I am enclosing with this letter two documents. Firstly, a spreadsheet which indicates clearly the position of your particular parish/benefice in relation to a number of data factors, including your population, monthly members, share history etc. Secondly, a flow chart which outlines some of the considerations which will help us in discerning the most appropriate resource. My hope is that through our conversation, and in the light of the wider MMU and diocesan strategy, the diocese will be able to support you in making an appointment that is both realistic and sustainable into the future.

In the meantime, please be assured of my prayers and support as you move towards the vacancy. Your Area Dean, XXXXXXXXXX, is also available to help, particularly in regard to arranging cover for services.

I will explain more about the vacancy process and how it works when we meet, but it would be good to set a provisional date for a meeting with the whole PCC sometime in [insert month] so that we can discuss the way forward together. I will ask my PA to negotiate a suitable potential date for this PCC meeting with you when she is in touch to set up our initial conversation.

With thanks for all you are and do,

Yours etc. etc.