

**Diocese of Chelmsford:
Arrangements to implement the House of Bishops' Declaration
on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.**

The Guidance note for Bishops and Parishes begins with a statement of guiding principles:-

The House reaffirms the five guiding principles which it first commended in May 2013 when submitting legislative proposals to the General Synod for the consecration of women to the episcopate and which the Synod welcomed in its resolution of 20 November 2013. They need to be read one with the other and held together in tension, rather than being applied selectively:

- **Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;**
- **Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;**
- **Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;**
- **Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and**
- **Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.**

Introduction

The House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (GS Misc 1076) and associated Guidance Note (GS Misc 1077) are on the diocesan website. These diocesan guidelines add comments relevant to i) the particular situation in Chelmsford diocese and ii) the transition from the previous arrangements.

Transitional arrangements mean that until **17th November 2016**, parishes which (on or before 16th November 2014) have passed, and not rescinded, a resolution under the 1993 Measure or the former Act of Synod will be treated as having passed a resolution under the Declaration.

Extracts from the Guidance note are in italics for ease of reference.

A Passing a resolution

1. A PCC wishing to pass a resolution needs to be aware that the resolution should be passed:
 - *at a meeting of which the secretary of the PCC has given members at least four weeks' notice of the place and time of the meeting and of the motion to be considered*

OR

- *at a meeting held under section 11 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986*
2. The House of Bishops regards it as 'good practice' for PCCs 'to enable members of the wider church community to submit views before any meeting at which a resolution is to be considered.'
 3. The Bishop of Chelmsford will respond to resolutions duly passed in accordance with the House of Bishops Guidance note.
 4. *The recommended form of the resolution is:*
'This PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.'
 5. Any resolution should have the support of either
 - (a) a majority of those present at a meeting at which at least two-thirds of the members of the PCC who are entitled to attend are present OR
 - (b) a majority of all the members of the PCC.
 6. *A copy of any resolution passed should be sent to the diocesan bishop, archdeacon, diocesan registrar and registered patron.*

B Conversations between the bishop and PCC

7. The PCC should *nominate one or more of its members to articulate to the diocesan Bishop the particular needs of the parish in the light of the theological conviction that underlies the resolution.*
8. Where a PCC has passed such a resolution for the first time, the Bishop of Chelmsford will usually wish to meet the representatives. The Bishop will need to clarify whether the parish is asking for particular episcopal pastoral and sacramental ministry, or seeking provision of appropriate clergy for the parish.
9. Where pastoral and sacramental ministry have previously been provided under the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 and the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993, and the PCC wishes this to continue, the PCC will need to pass a new resolution as outlined in section A. It will then usually be possible to conclude the necessary arrangements by correspondence between the PCC and the Bishop of Chelmsford. In some cases, however, the nature of the underlying theological conviction may lead the PCC *to articulate to the diocesan Bishop the particular needs of the parish.*
10. In relation to priestly ministry, the diocesan Bishop will establish the particular needs of the parish arising from their theological convictions, and ensure that these are communicated clearly to those responsible for any new appointment.

C. Multi-parish benefices

- 11. When it comes to decisions about the appointment of clergy to multi-parish benefices, the needs of parishes that have not passed a resolution should be weighed alongside those of any parish that has.*
- 12. The aim should be to explore options that will avoid, on the one hand, a single parish being able to frustrate the wishes of the others in the benefice and, on the other, that parish being denied the pastoral and sacramental provision that the PCC has sought.*
- 13. Where a resolution is passed by a parish in a multi-parish benefice, the diocesan bishop will consult with representatives of the other parishes in the benefice in relation to the practical arrangements that need to be made to give effect to the resolution.*

D. Mission and Ministry 'Units'

- 14. It is expected that PCCs will work together within Mission and Ministry 'Units' in the light of the five guiding principles.*
- 15. The guidance about multi-parish benefices will be helpful in exploring ways of working within a Mission and Ministry 'Unit', to ensure that parishes which have passed a resolution receive the pastoral and sacramental provision they have sought, without frustrating the wishes of others in the Mission and Ministry 'Unit'.*

E. Review

- 16. A PCC that has passed a resolution is expected to review it from time to time, especially when a vacancy arises in the benefice, but this is no longer a requirement.*
- 17. The process for convening a meeting with a view to rescinding a resolution and the majority required are the same as for passing the original resolution i.e. at a meeting of which the secretary of the PCC has given members at least four weeks' notice of the place and time of the meeting and of the motion to be considered **OR** at a meeting held under section 11 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986.
Any resolution should have the support of either
(a) a majority of those present at a meeting at which at least two-thirds of the members of the PCC who are entitled to attend are present **OR**
(b) a majority of all the members of the PCC.*

F. Disputes

Full information about the process in the event of any dispute is contained in the House of Bishops Declaration and Guidance note.

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