Handbook for

Area Deans and Lay Chairs

The Diocese of Oxford is the Church of England in
Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Together, we are the Church, called and sent by God
as disciples of Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit.
We are a living, growing network of more than a
thousand congregations, chaplaincies and schools.

Together, we are called to be more Christ-like: to be the
Church of the Beatitudes: contemplative, compassionate
and courageous for the sake of God's world.

Together, we work with God and with others for
the common good in every place in one of the great
crossroads of the world.

Together, we are called to proclaim the Christian faith
afresh in this generation with joy and hope and love.

Together, we are called to dream dreams and see visions
of what could be and see those visions come to birth.

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Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous.

February 2019

FROM THE BISHOP OF OXFORD

Bishop Steven writes:

Ligaments and sinews

I swallowed a fishbone last July. It was entirely my own fault. I made the fish pie and didn't check carefully for bones. My daughter was staying and insisted on a trip to A & E. There were various X-Rays and examinations. The hospital kept me in overnight and removed the offending bone under a general anaesthetic then sent me home with a souvenir in a jar the next morning.

More tests followed (thankfully all clear). The care has been excellent. But I've seen rather more than I wanted to of my insides through scopes and scanners. I'm even more aware than I was that the human body is fearfully and wonderfully made.

Colossians and Ephesians both offer us an inside view of the Body of Christ which is the Church – also fearfully and wonderfully made. Colossians talks of the way the whole body is "nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews" and "grows with a growth which is from God" (2.19). Ephesians speaks of a body "joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love" (4.16).

There is no doubt in my mind that Lay Chairs and Area Deans are key ligaments and sinews in the body of Christ across the Diocese. Through the gift of your time and care you hold the body of Christ in this place together, enable a common vision and help every part to be nourished. Ligaments and sinews are seldom in the limelight – but you know instantly if they are not working properly.

So thank you for all that you do, year in and year out. There is lots to be done and some of it is very detailed work. But keep in mind the aim (according to Colossians and Ephesians): to grow the body of Christ in love for the sake of the world. This year we will be aiming to move forward together in our common vision in a way which is contemplative, compassionate and courageous. Your ministry of holding everything together will be key.

May God bless you in your calling to be ligaments and sinews in this coming year.

+Steven Oxford.

AREA DEANS / LAY CHAIR : APPOINTMENT AND TERM OF OFFICE

Area Deans are appointed by the Area Bishop after careful consultation with the Diocesan Bishop and those holding the Bishop's licence in the deanery and the Lay Chair and the Standing committee of the deanery. They are normally licensed for a five year term of office. The Bishop may either terminate or extend the period of office at any time.

Lay Chairs are elected by their deanery synod House of Laity for the three year life of the synod.

INSTITUTION AND TRAINING

The Parish Development Adviser for each archdeaconry will be responsible for organising the following process with the Area Bishop and Archdeacon for institution and training.

- This handbook will be available to anybody asked to take on the role.
- Where possible there should be a handover with the outgoing Area Dean or Lay Chair.
- A nearby Area Dean or Lay Chair who is willing to act as a mentor for the first few months will be appointed.
- There may be some public act of worship to licence and welcome the new office-holder.
- A 48-hour residential for those new in post will be organised in the first year. This is done on a Regional basis every January.

The following is also agreed to be part of regular support and development.

- There will be an annual meeting between the Area Bishop, Archdeacon, Parish Development Adviser, Area Dean and Lay Chair for each deanery, with some discussion about strategic objectives for the year ahead.
- An annual meeting of all diocesan Area Deans and Lay Chairs.
- There will be residentials as need is identified.
- There are occasional evening meetings for Lay Chairs.
- Specific CMD days are organised for Area Deans.

AREA DEANS : DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Area Dean is the Bishop's Officer licensed to act within a deanery in accordance with the Bishop's Charge:

As part of the team sharing in the episcope with the Bishop, the role of the Area Dean and the Deanery Lay Chair, working together, is

- To lead and unite the deanery
- To foster the well-being of the Deanery's clergy and people
- To foster the development of the mission of the Church in the deanery, diocese and beyond.

The Bishops regard the Area Deans as important leaders in the diocese, who act as key communicators between the Bishops and the other clergy of the diocese. They will have ready access to the Bishops and Archdeacons, and meet regularly with them in area staff meetings, and the annual diocesan meeting of Area Deans and Lay Chairs.

1. It is the Area Dean's responsibility to make known to the deanery and its clergy matters of diocesan and archdeaconry policy and decision and to report to the Bishops and Archdeacons any concerns expressed within the deanery.

2. Area Deans are called to share with Bishops and Archdeacons in watching over the wellbeing of clergy and their families. Please see the Flourishing in Ministry resources on the Diocesan website.

3. Area Deans convene regular meetings of the Deanery Chapter.

4. Area Deans are asked to appoint somebody to keep in touch with the retired clergy and others with permission to officiate who live within the deanery, and to report matters concerning their welfare to the Area Dean, the Bishop or Archdeacon. Those appointed should pay particular regard to any housebound clergy or clergy widows and widowers and should contact the archdeaconry officers for retired clergy and widows who are also available for advice (your Archdeacon's office will have their details).

5. The Area Dean should ensure that only members of the clergy who are licensed in the diocese are permitted to officiate in the deanery unless the Area Bishop has given permission.

6. The Area Dean is ex officio chair of the deanery House of Clergy.

7. During their terms of office, the Area Dean and Lay Chair are expected to be available to visit each parish in the deanery, by arrangement, to meet the incumbent and other staff, both lay and clerical, and the PCC to discuss pastoral or missional matters. This is separate from the Archdeacon's Visitation/Inspection of Churches (see p9)

8. During a vacancy in a parish/benefice, the Area Dean and churchwardens share the responsibility for the welfare of the parish(es) as joint 'sequestrators'. Detailed instructions are set out in the Vacancy Guidelines (available from your PDA), which is sent to churchwardens, when a vacancy occurs. The Area Dean must work closely with the churchwardens in planning an appropriate pattern of services, bearing in mind the availability of support within the deanery. See the section on

Vacant Benefices on page 10.

9. When a vacancy occurs the Area Bishops will work with the Deanery Pastoral Committee through the Area Dean and Lay Chair to ensure that the wider mission needs of the deanery are taken into account. These will supplement, but not replace, the parish's own representations. However, if a Vacancy Meeting is convened, both the Area Dean and the Lay Chair will be invited to attend.

10. As co-chairs of the deanery synod, the Area Dean and Lay Chair have an important role in the leadership of the deanery, and in developing its strategy for mission in and to the community it serves. They should foster the corporate life of the deanery and encourage local initiatives appropriate to the work of the Kingdom of God in their area.

11. Some Area Deans have Assistants (sometimes called Associate Area Deans), and in those deaneries the duties and responsibilities are shared. This can be discussed with your Bishop.

Such responsibilities can make demands not only on time but also on the spirit. Ensuring that there is good pastoral care and support for Area Deans is an important aspect to think about when asking someone to be willing to take up this role. It is an important aspect to think about when agreeing to take up this role.

THE LAY CHAIR : DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As part of the team sharing in the episcope with the Bishop, the role of the Area Dean and the Deanery Lay Chair, working together, is:

- to lead and unite the deanery
- to foster the well-being of the deanery's clergy and people
- to foster the development of the mission of the Church in the deanery, diocese and beyond.

Duties of the Lay Chair under the Synodical Government Measure 1969

1. To act as joint Chair of the deanery synod with the Area Dean, 'they shall agree between them who shall chair each meeting of the synod or particular items of business on the agenda of the synod' (see CRR28(1)a), and to chair meetings of the deanery house of laity. It is appropriate for both synod and standing committee that the chairing of meetings should alternate between the Area Dean and the Lay Chair, or be shared. The Lay Chair is ex officio chair of the deanery House of Laity.

2. Jointly with the Area Dean to call meetings of deanery synod and to determine the date and places of such meetings with the deanery standing committee.

3. In the terms of the Pastoral Measure 1983, (s)he is to be consulted as an interested party on all matters of pastoral re-organisation.

Overall objectives of the Lay Chair

1. To encourage the deanery laity to participate fully in the planning and running of the affairs of the deanery, and especially to encourage attendance at synod meetings.

2. To facilitate a two-way channel of information between the deanery laity, particularly church wardens, and the wider Church.

3. In order to discharge these responsibilities, (s)he may convene occasional meetings of the house of laity. Some Lay Chairs find it helpful to share regularly in worship at all churches within their Deanery, to get to know churchwardens and PCC Treasurers in their deanery and, by invitation, to meet PCCs.

Guidelines for non-statutory responsibilities

The Deanery Lay Chair is expected

1. To attend institutions and licensings and to welcome new clergy on behalf of the laity of the deanery.
2. To respond to the notification of a vacancy in the post of Area Dean and to make recommendations regarding the nomination of a new Area Dean.
3. To be an ex-officio member of all deanery committees.
4. To conduct together with the Area Dean, the Visitation of the parishes (see p9).
5. To respond to requests made by the Bishop or by other appointing bodies, for information and advice about deanery appointments.
6. To make arrangements for the assessment of parishes for the payment of Parish Share. They should help the deanery Standing Committee to apportion and

collect the Deanery Share, and to encourage parishes to pay their contribution on time. They are expected to support the Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance in communicating with parishes in their Deanery, and with educating them on Christian giving and the financial facts of Church life. The deanery may appoint a Parish Share Committee.

7. To encourage parishes in speedy return of accounts and other requests for membership and attendance returns.

8. To be responsible for ensuring that the regular programme for Quinquennial Inspections of each church in the deanery is carried out, through either the deanery standing committee or an appointed deanery Quinquennial officer.

9. To be available with the Area Dean to visit each parish in the deanery, by arrangement, to meet the incumbent and other staff, both lay and clerical, and the PCC to discuss matters of common pastoral concern.

10. To work with the Bishop and the Deanery Pastoral Committee to ensure that the wider mission needs of the deanery are taken into account. These will supplement, but not replace, the parish's own representations. However, if a Vacancy Meeting is convened, both the Area Dean and the Lay Chair will be invited to attend.

11. To share with the Area Dean in the spiritual and strategic leadership of the Deanery by developing its strategy for mission in and to the community it serves. They should foster the corporate life of the deanery and encourage local initiatives appropriate to the work of the Kingdom of God in their area.

12. To be fully briefed about the proceedings of Synod. Lay Chairs are encouraged to stand for election to Diocesan Synod.

Such responsibilities can make demands not only on time but also on the spirit. Ensuring that there is good pastoral care and support for Lay Chairs is an important aspect to think about when asking someone to be willing to take up this role. It is an important aspect to think about when agreeing to take up this role.

ARCHDEACON'S REPRESENTATIVE

The Area Dean and the Lay Chair have a special relationship with the Archdeacon and should be in close contact with him or her about any matters of significance concerning the clergy, parishes and buildings.

The Area Dean and the Lay Chair are ex officio members of Deanery Committees, although precise committee arrangements may vary from deanery to deanery.

The Area Dean and the Lay Chair, consult regularly together to plan and consider jointly Deanery matters, including administration, finance and mission, involving the standing committee and Treasurer as appropriate. This will include establishing and keeping under review a principled and transparent method for determining the fair allocation of the Deanery Share among the parishes of the deanery, to be approved by the Deanery Synod.

Archdeacon's Visitations

(a) Parish Inspections

The Archdeacon may delegate the task of visiting the churches to the Area Dean and Lay Chair, who conduct the visit and send a report to the Archdeacon. The timescale for this should be agreed, and does not have to be completed before the Visitation.

Together, they will inspect the churches, chapels and churchyards within their deanery every three years. On such inspections they are to examine the state of the terriers, inventories, log books, plate, altar linen, ornaments, registers, service books, electoral rolls, together with safeguarding, health and safety, accessibility for disabled people to buildings and activities.

A checklist for use during the Inspections is available from your Archdeacon, together with a certificate which should be completed and sent to your Archdeacon's office. Ask you Archdeacon for further guidance and information.

Such parish visits should be arranged at a time when the churchwardens can attend. The wardens should be given the opportunity to raise any matters of importance to their parish. This provides a good opportunity for communication and mutual support. Sensitivity to the need for confidentially about local issues will be important.

Some deaneries have formal ecumenical links through Local Ecumenical Projects, Churches Together, etc. but others do not. The Area Dean and Lay Chair should be aware of the importance of ecumenical contacts, and foster ecumenism within the deanery in the most practical ways possible.

(b) Annual Visitation Service

The Archdeacon will be in touch with his/her Area Deans to arrange the time, date and venue of the service at which all churchwardens will be admitted together. On occasion, the annual Visitation Service will be taken by the Area Bishop.

VACANT BENEFICES

On a parish or benefice becoming vacant (refer to appendix 8 for information on what to do before your incumbent leaves), the Area Dean with the churchwardens is responsible for the parish. The Area Dean is to make careful preparation for each vacancy, consulting with the parishes concerned through their churchwardens and others as necessary, to ensure that the vacancy and process which will be followed in making a new appointment is well understood. The Diocesan Buildings Department will contact the churchwardens about their responsibilities for the parsonage house during the vacancy.

Specifically, the following matters will be covered:

1	Ensure that churchwardens have obtained all keys to the vacated parsonage house.
2	Make early contact with the churchwardens to help them arrange for the conduct of Sunday and occasional services.
3	Ensure that the churchwardens, along with the outgoing incumbent, check and sign the terrier and inventory of the parish church(es).
4	The Area Dean and Lay Chair will be invited to attend all formal Vacancy Meetings. At least one of them will normally be involved in the short-listing and interviewing groups to ensure the Deanery Strategic/Pastoral/Mission Plan is understood and considered. This will involve sensitivity to the legal rights of Patrons.
5	The Area Dean will work closely with the Archdeacon at the time of appointments, on associated matters such as disposal and acquisition of parsonages, and the chosen place of residence.
6	The Area Dean is responsible to the Bishop for the planning of institutions and licensings in collaboration with the churchwardens and the incumbent-designate (or equivalent).
7	Welcome the incoming incumbent or Priest-in-Charge to the chapter and the synod.

PATRONAGE (BENEFICES) MEASURE 1986

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROCEDURE

1. Priest informs Bishop of resignation or retirement
2. For Incumbents: Registrar sends Vacancy notices to PCC Secretaries and Patrons.
3. Area Office asks deanery about plans for pastoral reorganisation and whether the benefice should be suspended.
4. PDA meets parishes about process and parish profile.
5. Bishop/Archdeacon requests Registry to send out vacancy notices to PCC's.
6. PCCs hold Section 11 meeting (within 4 weeks after receiving vacancy notices).
7. Section 12 meeting (within 6 weeks of Section 11 meeting) between Bishop/Archdeacon, Patrons, Area Dean, Lay Chair and PCCs.
8. Advertise, shortlist and interview.
9. Patrons/Bishop offer post to successful candidate.
10. Institution/Collation, Induction and Installation or licensing (for Priest in Charge or Associate Clergy).

For more details, see the pages 12-16 or the Vacancy Guidelines.

For comprehensive Vacancy Guidelines including details of Section 11 and Section 12 meetings, please see the relevant document for each Archdeaconry on the Diocesan Website:

Berkshire: https://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Berkshire-Vacancy-Guidelines.pdf
Buckinghamshire: (please contact the Archdeacon's office)
Dorchester: https://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Dorchester-Vacancy-Guidelines-March-2018.docx
Oxford: https://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Oxford-Archdeaconry-Vacancy-Guidelines-pdf.pdf

THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Background

Appointments in the Church of England are governed by a piece of legislation called The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986. These notes are designed to help in understanding the Measure. Only the Measure, and not these notes, is authoritative. Questions about the legal implications should be referred to the Archdeacon who will consult the Diocesan Registry as appropriate.

There are three different parties involved in the appointment process whose roles are set down in the Patronage Measure:

The Patron who may be a private individual, a group of people or a corporate body, or in many cases the Diocesan Bishop

The Parish Representatives elected by the PCC(s) who affirm (or veto) the patron's nomination

The Bishop who may also affirm or veto a nomination and institutes the priest to the parish/benefice

The system has evolved over several centuries and provides some very important checks and balances. In practice all three parties work together on the process.

Initial stages

Soon after the resignation/retirement of your incumbent, the PCC Secretary/ies will receive a legal document called The Notice of Vacancy from the Diocesan Registrar. In the case of a retirement this will happen when they formally retire, which can often be some time after their final services. If they have gone to another post, then this notice will normally come after their licensing to the new post. This is when the vacancy formally begins.

When a post become vacant, if there is the possibility of pastoral re-organisation, then the Bishop can suspend the living. This means that a Priest-in-Charge instead of a Vicar is appointed. The Bishop will confirm with the Area Dean and Lay Chair whether the Deanery Plan envisages any change to the current arrangements. Then, assuming that the parish is not to be suspended, the process then normally unfolds in the following way.

Who will be involved?

A number of people from outside the parish/benefice will be involved in the process of appointing the new incumbent. They will be working together with the parish(es) for the best outcome for the parish/benefice. Here is a 'who's who':

Bishop

The Bishop makes the decision whether to license a new incumbent or not and so has to be happy with the person who is selected.

Patron(s)

The Patrons 'present' the candidate to the Bishop.

Archdeacon
Often involved in the process and is a good person to ask for advice if Area Dean is not available.

Parish Development Adviser
Will be involved early on in helping you to think about your needs and aspirations for the development of the parish, and what needs to go in the Parish Profile.

Area Dean
Shares legal responsibility for the parish with the wardens during the vacancy and should be first port of call for any problems. The Area Dean and the Deanery Lay Chair will be involved in the shortlisting and interviewing to keep the deanery perspective in view.

Parish Representatives
Normally two representatives (or two from each parish in a multi-parish benefice) who are chosen by the PCC(s) and who will be involved in the selection process. Individually at the interviews, they have a right of veto over any candidate.

Preparation of the parish profile

This is a very important document – effectively the "shop window" of the parish/benefice. If well drawn up, it will greatly help potential candidates discern whether or not to apply for the post. A good profile will be descriptive of the church, congregation, community, area, activities, services and so on. It's very helpful to include details and photographs of the Vicarage or Rectory, and its post code too. It will be analytical of your strengths and weaknesses. It will capture the hopes, aspirations, and vision for the future mission of the church. And it will be clear about the qualities and characteristics the parish(es) would like to see in their ideal new incumbent. It will also contain an outline role description and person specification for the new incumbent.

The process of drawing up the profile, role description and person specification can begin soon after the present incumbent has announced that they are leaving, and will enable the congregation(s) to really think hard about who they are, what God is calling them to be, and who they might need as a new incumbent to help them move towards this calling.

There is a document available on the diocesan website called "Guidelines for drawing up your parish profile" which helps parishes think this through. www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/parish-development-advisers/ The Parish Development Adviser will also be happy to help.

If this is a multi-parish benefice, it is important that the PCCs agree to a joint wording of the Parish Profile, and that a joint drafting group be set up to take responsibility for coming up with a document which is acceptable to all.

The Area Dean and Deanery Lay Chair add a short section outlining the deanery perspective. There are some clear guidelines on what might be said about the diocese and the use of photographs in the profile, which are attached as Appendix 6.

The “Section 11” meeting

This refers to Section 11 of the 1986 Patronage (Benefices) Measure, and the PCC must meet within four weeks of receiving the legal notices from the Diocesan Registrar. The purpose of this PCC meeting is to

- Formally agree the arrangements for preparing a parish/benefice profile. *Usually this has begun well before the meeting takes place.*
- Appoint two lay members of each PCC to act as the parish’s representative in connection with the selection of the new vicar. These people will represent the interests of the parish at the shortlisting meeting and on the appointment panel.
- Decide whether to request that the presenting Patron should consider advertising the vacancy (for which the PCCs will normally have to pay, along with travel costs of candidates etc.). The advertisement will be written in the light of the Parish/Benefice profile in consultation with the Patron and Bishop/Archdeacon.
- Request a written statement from the Area Bishop describing in relation to the benefice the needs of the Diocese and the wider interests of the church
- Request a joint meeting (known as a Section 12 meeting) with the patron and the Bishop/Archdeacon to exchange views about the PCC/Benefice’s Profile and the Bishop’s written statement. The meeting must be held within six weeks of the request. The Area Dean and Deanery Lay chair are also invited to the meeting.

In a multi-parish benefice, this is a meeting of all the PCCs of the benefice together.

The “Section 12” or Vacancy Meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to set the scene for all that follows in the appointment process. All members of PCCs are most welcome to attend. The agenda is drawn up by the Bishop’s Office and will cover:

1. Who is involved in the appointment process and what are their roles and responsibilities.
    A. PCC – to have produced a profile, at final draft stage, which contains details of the parish or benefice, an outline role description detailing what will be the key areas for the new parish priest, and a person specification which outlines the qualifications, experience, skills and competencies being sought.
    B. Patron as the individual, or institution, who presents the candidate to the Bishop. They will have insights to share about your parish/benefice too.
    C. Bishop who needs to agree to licence the candidate.
    D. Parish Representatives –you will have chosen these at your section 11 meeting. Individually the parish representatives have the right of veto over each candidate, provided their ground for exercising their veto is not discriminatory.
    E. Area Dean and Deanery Lay Chair – offer a deanery wide perspective and act in an advisory capacity.
    F. Wider Ministry Team – it’s beneficial for anyone who has an authorised ministry to have the opportunity to meet all the candidates. This group may well include SSMs, LLMs, those with a licence to preach, and those retired clergy who would like to attend. While they are not a formal part of the process the Bishop or Archdeacon will consult them for their views.
    G. Wider Congregation – people to undertake a whole range of practical task such as providing refreshments, ferrying candidates about, and so on.

Above all the wider congregation can support this whole process by their prayers.

2. The task of this meeting is to:
   a) Discuss and agree the final draft profile, role description and person specification. This often leads to minor amendments being made before the final version is produced. When the Parish/Benefice Profile is in its final form, with photographs etc., it should be sent to the Bishop's Office in electronic form so that it can be placed on the diocesan web site and made available via the Church Times.
   b) Agree who will draw up the Advertisement, which needs to have four or five attractive bullet points. *The Church Times* has the widest readership so two inclusions will reach many people. Details of the post will also go on the Diocese of Oxford web-site at the same time.
   c) Achieve clarity regarding costs associated with the whole interview process. As well as the advertisement, some candidates may need overnight accommodation as well as their travel costs both to and from the interview, and any meals and drinks provided across the interview day.
   d) Note the timetable which will include dates:
      - By which the advertisement needs to be with the Bishop's or Archdeacon's PA.
      - For dates when the advertisement will appear in *The Church Times, the Church of England's Pathways web site* *https://www.cofepathways.org/members/index.php* and on the Diocesan Web Site.
      - Closing Date for receipt of applications by the Bishop's Office.
      - Short-listing of applications by the Appointment Panel, which will comprise the Bishop or Archdeacon, the Parish Representatives, the Patron, and the Area Dean and the Deanery Lay Chair.

The Shortlisting

Hopefully a good number of people will have applied so a careful process of discernment will be necessary to judge who should be invited for interview. Experience has taught that having more than five candidates for interview can make the whole process unwieldy and difficult to handle.

It is at this meeting that the questions to be used at the interviews will be decided. The scope of the questions should be determined by the Parish/Benefice profile. They should enable exploration to be made of the candidate's ability to do the job that has been specified. Where there is a church school, good examples of questions are to ask how a candidate might nurture and promote the relationship between the church and the school, and how they might support inter-faith initiatives in the school.

How the interview day might work out.

The day is designed to be one of mutual exploration and discernment by everyone involved. The day usually begins with Holy Communion at 8.30am. It's important that the candidates, and their spouses/partners, have the opportunity to see round the Vicarage/Rectory. Time to visit local schools is beneficial and where it is a church school the panel will be seeking feedback from the head teacher and chair of governors. Also, on the day, the candidates will need to meet the Ministry Team; getting a feel for what it might be like to live and work here are essential too. There may well be some key local dignitaries such as the Mayor or Chair of the local Council who could be invited along to the lunch to give the candidates more information.

The interview

This is, by its nature, an exacting occasion for all concerned. There is a great deal of listening, praying and discerning involved. All members of the interview panel are bound by the highest level of confidentiality. It's good practice to keep a record of the answers which candidates give. This will be a helpful contribution to the discussions at the end of the day.

The overarching question members of the panel will be bearing in mind is not "Is this the best person we can get?" but "Is this God's choice and the right person for this benefice/parish at this time in its life?"

All candidates should be asked the same substantive questions – although supplementary questions may be dependent on the initial answer that is given. Questions should be open ended, simple and presented in a friendly way. Remember that people need to be allowed time to ask questions of the panel and valuable insights can often be learned from the perceptiveness of the questions that a candidate asks you.

Questions that relate to a candidate's age, race, gender, marital state, sexual orientation, or disability are **not** permitted.

After the interviews have finished the appointment panel will discuss each candidate and decide on their preferred one. All members of the panel should agree on one candidate (decisions are not taken by a majority decision).

Offering the post

The offer of the post is made by the Bishop or Patron. If it is accepted, it will be subject to a medical report, references and a Safeguarding check. The Bishop is responsible for contacting all candidates after the decision has been made. The identity of the new vicar must be kept confidential until the official announcement is made. This is normally co-ordinated between sending and receiving parishes. At this point, details of the appointment should be made widely known.

All paperwork connected to the interview process should be regarded as confidential and returned to the Bishop/Archdeacon at the end of the interview process.

Once the successful candidate has agreed to take the job, the usual period for him/her to give notice in their current parish is normally no less than 3 months.

INSTITUTIONS, COLLATIONS AND LICENSINGS

There are basically two forms of service to mark the start of a new ministry within a benefice.

- When a priest is becoming team rector, rector or vicar the form of service is an Institution and Induction. The priest must be presented by the patron(s) of the living, is instituted by the bishop and is then inducted and installed by the archdeacon. If the bishop is the patron, the service is a Collation rather than an Institution.

- When someone is being appointed as team vicar or priest-in-charge the form of service is a Licensing. The priest may be presented by the patron, is licensed by the bishop, and depending on the circumstances may be installed by the archdeacon.

If a minister is being licensed to a non-parochial cure, such as a hospital, school or college, then these guidelines and the order of service should be adapted to fit the circumstances.

1. Area Deans have the responsibility for making the preparation for these services in the parishes of their deaneries. Together with churchwardens and the Lay Chairs they should always be consulted about the date of such services.

2. Area Deans should consult with all the churchwardens involved and the incumbent designate to arrange the following matters:

Invitations	These are sent in the names of the churchwardens to deanery clergy, other ministers (lay and ordained) who have officiated during the vacancy and local ministers of other denominations. All these should be invited to robe for the service and an indication of the appropriate dress code should be given. Also invite the deanery Lay Chair, and the head teachers of church schools within the benefice. The incumbent designate should also be asked to provide a list of people to be invited. Local civic leaders and other representatives of the community should also be invited. Invitations should include spouses or partners.
Parking	The police may need to be advised that the service is to take place and their recommendation about parking of cars should be followed. Parking spaces for the Bishop, Archdeacon and Patron should be reserved.
Order of Service	The Diocesan Order of Service, available on the diocesan website, should be used https://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Service-of-institution-or-collation-and-induction.doc and https://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Institution-induction-licensing-and-installation-NOTES.pdf . Any alterations must be approved by the officiating Bishop. The incumbent designate chooses the hymns. A copy of the service must be sent to the Bishop at least two weeks before the service, and the Area Dean needs to ensure that this is done.

Rehearsal	This should take place a few days before the service under the supervision of the Area Dean. It is important that all taking part understand fully their particular role including any movement within the service as well as what to do and say. Any person taking part in the act of a brief formal welcome needs to feel at ease and understand exactly what to do, especially if he/she has not been present at the rehearsal.
Service Preliminaries	Area Deans should specifically oversee all the following matters:
Advice to Bishop	The Area Deans should inform the officiating Bishop of the names of those whose ministry has supported the parishes during the interregnum and also of any community representatives who may be attending the service about whom he should be particularly aware. This advice should be given in writing at least two days before the service.
Seating	This must be carefully planned especially when space is limited. Seats must be set aside for the Patron or his representative (if not a clerk in holy orders), as well as all other guests to whom specific invitations have been sent.
Robing	Local circumstances will determine the best locations for robing. Please include LLMs from the deanery.
Processions	The Order of Procession and Recession shall follow the normal conventions. (Crucifer, Acolytes, Choir, LLMs, Clergy, Area Dean and Lay Chair, Archdeacon, Wardens, Bishop, Chaplain)
Vestry Prayer	The Area Dean leads the vestry prayer (or arranges for some other minister to do this).
After the Service	Ensure that the collection, which is always for the Bishops' Outreach Fund, is sent by the PCC Treasurer to the diocesan office. Suitable envelopes can be obtained from Church House Oxford. A full page in the service register should be available for signing after the service by the Bishop and those involved in the service.

Once the Priest arrives – Refer to Appendix 7 A Guide to Welcoming your new Minister

Time, care and prayer spent by the Area Dean in making these arrangements will ensure that what takes place glorifies God and enables the mission of the Church in that benefice. The Bishop's Outreach Fund is used by the Bishop to foster mission work throughout the world, and a list of annual gifts is published and available from the Bishop's Office.

Area Deans should then arrange to meet the incumbent designate, to welcome him/her on behalf of the chapter and deanery, to advise him/her on the dates of future meetings of both these bodies. The Archdeacon and the Parish Development Adviser also visit the new priest in the first few months after arrival, and an orientation day is usually arranged at Church House Oxford.

WHAT IS PASTORAL REORGANISATION?

The basic framework of the ministry and mission in the Church of England comprises parishes (units of administration), benefices (units of ministry) and deaneries (geographical areas). These provide the structural and organisational framework of how the Diocese operates.

Some of these structures and groupings are historical, and so need to be reviewed from time to time to enable the local church to be more effective in mission and ministry whilst balancing needs and available resources. These changes can include, for example:

- Uniting benefices
- Uniting parishes
- Altering boundaries and names
- Creating team or group ministries

Sometimes pastoral re-organisation will also involve changes to patronage and a review of housing provisions.

Why reorganise?

Pastoral reorganisation is intended to focus resources (both people and finances), ease administrative burdens, enable more effective governance, provide greater support and team work in addressing local needs for pastoral care from clergy and their lay teams. It may be influenced by

- Local requirements (boundary simplification, churches pooling resources)
- Increasing deployment of self-supporting, part time, and lay ministry
- Diocesan Initiatives and Deanery plans
- Decreasing congregations and problems with church buildings

Because the existing framework of parish/benefice/deanery is legal, a formal process needs to be undertaken in order to put any changes to the structure into effect. This will also make clear what the Patronage arrangements of the new structure will be, and how the clergy are to be housed (and what will happen to any other houses that have been used for clergy housing in the past).

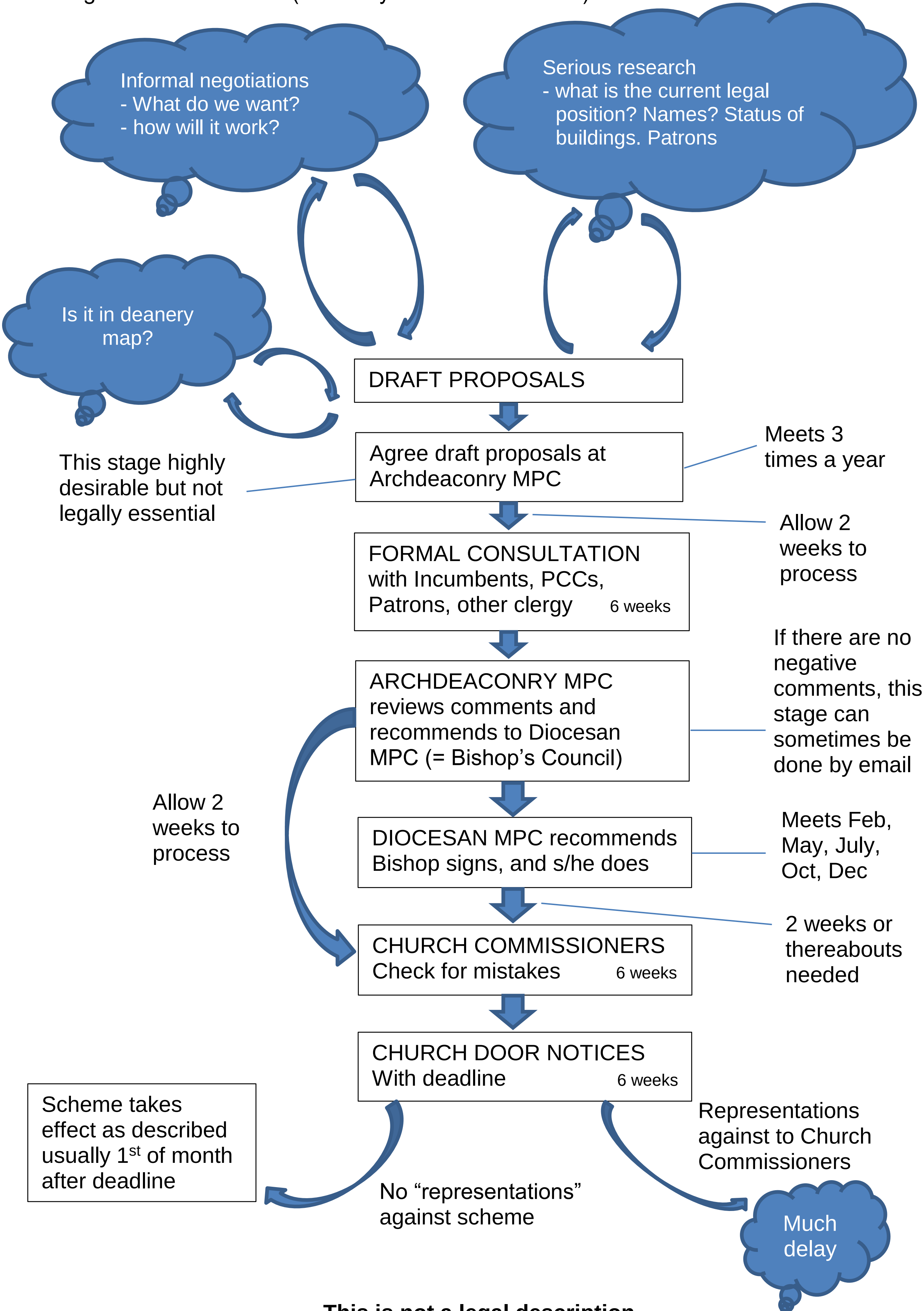
Who decides when pastoral reorganisation is necessary, and what form it should take?

The Diocese of Oxford recognises that those who live and worship in our parishes are usually best placed to identify the needs and requirements of those parishes, and each deanery has its own pastoral committee which should formulate a Deanery Plan to support spiritual and numerical growth throughout its parishes. These plans take into account critical factors like ageing congregations, levels of parish giving and share, retiring clergy and the viability of its buildings, and consider whether pastoral reorganisation could help relieve some of these pressures at parish level. Some requests for reorganisation start within the parish, although the deanery and archdeaconry will need to take an overview of what is proposed.

The Process for pastoral reorganisation

Once proposals have been agreed informally locally, they are taken to the Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee (‘AMPC’), and the Diocesan MPC, which has a legal obligation to ensure that deanery proposals are in line with Diocesan policy and will fit well into the ‘bigger picture’ of developments across the Diocese. These committees will organise more formal consultation with both the PCC and the wider community. A fundamental principle of consultations is that no final decision is made until after due process. From there the Pastoral Secretary, together with the relevant Archdeacon, will manage the legal processes. See next page for flowchart and Appendix 9 for more information.

A “straight forward” scheme (but every scheme is different)



This is <u>not</u> a legal description

CONFIRMATIONS

1. There are guidelines for confirmation services within the diocese, the latest edition of which is to be found on the Diocesan website. The Area Bishop will consult Area Deans about any revisions that seem appropriate from time to time.

2. The Area Dean should remind chapter members that collections at confirmation services are to be sent to the diocesan office for the Bishop's Outreach Fund. Collections should be recorded in the Service Register and properly recorded as both income and expenditure in the PCC accounts. Those presenting candidates should bring with them their confirmation register and completed confirmation returns. Copies of these forms are available on the diocesan website.

DEANERY CHAPTERS

The Area Dean is the chair of the clergy chapter.

Although the chapter has no formal place as a statutory body in the synodical government of the Church, it has a vital pastoral and educational role to play in the care and guidance of and collaboration between ministers in both practical and spiritual matters.

Frequency of meetings

Chapter meeting should be held regularly and at dates and times, that enable as many clergy as possible to attend. Opportunity should from time to time be given for those whose other duties preclude meetings during the day to attend at a time more convenient to them, for example in the evening or at lunchtimes.

Membership of chapters

All those who are licensed, and at the discretion of the chapter those who have permission to officiate, should be included in membership. However where non parochial and retired clergy are likely to dominate the chapter certain meetings should be set aside for the parochial clergy alone. In order to affirm the collaborative nature of ministry, chapters should consider inviting Licensed Lay Ministers to attend certain meetings. Meetings of an educational and social nature are particularly suitable for this purpose, as are Quiet Days.

The Lay Chair may be invited to attend meetings of the chapter where there are particular matters to discuss.

Diocesan communication

The Area Dean must report to chapter members issues raised at staff meetings called by the Area Bishop and Archdeacon, and also identify questions and issues that can be asked at future meetings on behalf of the deanery and its clergy. The Area Dean should also find out if the Lay Chair wishes any specific concerns of the laity to be raised at area staff meetings.

Relationship with deanery synod

It is important that the Area Dean and the other members of chapter fully recognise the limits of the chapter's authority and do not make or pre-empt any decision which more properly belongs to the deanery synod.

DEANERY SYNODS

Deanery synods are governed by the Synodical Government Measure 1969 to which specific reference should be made. This provides amongst other matters that

'The Area Dean and a member of the House of Laity elected by that House shall be joint Chairs of the deanery synod'.

Leadership of the deanery synod is therefore a shared responsibility. The key joint task of the chairs is to enable all within the deanery to make a contribution to the life and mission of the Church according to their own particular gifts. Therefore, together they should encourage all synod members to see the deanery as a body able to create and support creative mission hand in hand with the parishes.

The Area Dean and Lay Chair are ultimately responsible for the correct and efficient operation of the synod and its committees including the deanery synod standing committee and the Deanery Pastoral Committee (see Appendix 9).

EXPENSES OF OFFICE

All reasonable expenses incurred by the Area Dean in carrying out the duties of office including travelling and office expenses will be reimbursed by the diocesan office, provided that they fall within the categories set out in the form that is available on the web.

Claims for expenses are authorised by the Archdeacon.

Area Deans are supplied with a float of £500 and are asked to send in returns quarterly.

https://www.oxford.anglican.org/support-services/finance/expenses-forms/

All expenses for the Lay Chair are met by the deanery.

Appendix 1

THE CANONS RELATING TO THE AREA DEANS[1]

C23 OF AREA DEANS

1. Every Area Dean shall report to the Bishop any matter in any parish within the deanery which it may be necessary or useful for the Bishop to know, particularly any case of serious illness or other form of distress amongst the clergy, the vacancy of any cure of souls and the measures taken by the sequestrators to secure the ministration of the word and sacraments and other rites of the church during the said vacancy, and any case of a minister from another diocese officiating in any place otherwise than as provided in Canon C8.

2. In the case of any omission in any parish to prepare and maintain a church electoral roll or to form or maintain a parochial church council or to hold the annual parochial church meeting, the Area Dean on such omission being brought to his notice shall ascertain and report to the Bishop the cause thereof.

3. If at any time the Area Dean has reason to believe that there is any serious defect in the fabric, ornaments, and furniture of any church or chapel, or that the buildings of any benefice are in a state of disrepair, he shall report the matter to the Archdeacon.

4. The Area Dean shall be a joint Chairman (with a member of the house of laity) of the deanery synod.

F17 OF KEEPING A RECORD OF THE PROPERTY OF CHURCHES

1. Every Bishop within his diocese shall procure so far as he is able that a full note and terrier of all lands, goods, and other possessions of the parochial churches and chapels therein be compiled and kept by the minister and churchwardens in accordance with instructions and forms prescribed from time to time by the general synod.

2. Every Archdeacon shall survey at least once in three years, either in person or by the Area Dean, satisfy himself that the directions of the preceding paragraph of this canon have been carried out in all the parishes within his jurisdiction.

F18 OF THE SURVEY OF PARISH CHURCHES

Every Archdeacon shall survey the churches, chancels, and the churchyards within his jurisdiction at least once in three years, either in person or by the Area Dean, and shall give direction for the amendment of all defects in the fabric, ornaments, and furniture of the same. In particular he shall exercise the powers conferred upon him by the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955.

[1] All references to gender in these legal Canons are printed here as they stand in law. It should be noted that Area Deans and Archdeacons can be men or women.

Appendix 2

CLERGY – LONG TERM SICKNESS

Reporting sickness

There is an expectation that all sickness is reported to enable parishes to organise work differently and provide cover for normal running of the services, At the same time, in the case of stipendiary clergy, this is so that we comply with the Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) scheme and its administration.

While all stipendiary clergy, unable to perform their duties because of sickness, are required to telephone or e-mail the Incumbent or Area Dean and the Stipends Administrator at Diocesan Church House as soon as possible, associate clergy may want to follow the same procedure due to the reasons provided before.

Pay entitlement when sick and procedure

Although you are not employed, you are normally entitled (because you pay Class 1 National Insurance contributions) to receive Statutory Sick Pay if you are ill. Under this Scheme, we are responsible for paying the first 28 weeks of sick pay. If you become ill and cannot carry out your duties, you can therefore claim sick pay provided the illness lasts for at least 4 consecutive days (including Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays). If entitled to SSP, stipend will be paid according to SSP rules. Sick pay works on a rolling 12 months period and takes account of all absence in that period.

At present, this entitles full time stipendiary clergy to a payment of full stipend for 28 weeks. The following requirements will need to be met:

- For sickness absence of up to seven days, a self-certificate must be obtained, completed and submitted to the Stipends Administrator (a copy of the Diocesan self-certificate form can be accessed here by clicking on the following link http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/sc2.pdf or obtained from the Stipends Administrator at Diocesan Church House as well as by contacting Payroll Services at Church House in London.
- If the sickness absence lasts more than seven days a medical certificate (now called Statement of Fitness for Work) signed by a GP or other medical practitioner must be submitted to the Stipends Administrator at the Diocesan Church Office (pat.burton@oxford.anglican.org)

After the 23rd week of absence the Church Commissioners issue form SSP 1 which gives details of the actions needed when statutory sick pay ends after the 28th week, concerning claiming other state benefits and invalidity allowances.

If you are ill for longer than 28 weeks, or if for any reason you are not entitled to Statutory Sick Pay, Clergy Payroll Services shall write to you with further advice.

Full stipend will be paid until the 28th week of absence, after which the Bishop has the following discretion.

- To reduce the stipend by up to 50%
- To reduce the stipend by the amount of Incapacity Benefit received and any other allowances 1 month’s notice should be given.

Current diocesan practice will be to reduce stipend by the amount of benefit received in order to maintain the equivalent of a full stipend.

The situation will be continuously monitored and medical certificates are expected to be submitted at all times.

For any period of extended sickness, the Archdeacon will keep in touch with the minister to assess progress and to see if an occupational health referral should be made. An occupational health referral may be considered at 28 weeks of absence.

If after an extended period of sickness, a minister is being advised by their doctor, or as an outcome of an occupational health referral, to consider early retirement, advice and support regarding the process will be available from the Archdeacon and Diocesan Secretary.

NOTES FOR INSPECTION OF CHURCHES, REGISTERS ETC, BY AREA DEANS AND LAY CHAIRS

Preparation

A few weeks before the visit an email should be sent to the incumbent and the churchwardens inviting them to meet you at the church at an agreed time.

With the email you should send a list of what you expect to see and to do and you should ask them to have the documents all laid out for your inspection.

The Visit

Arrange your timetable so as to leave plenty of time for travel between the churches (especially if you don't yet know your way around). Church Inspections may take up to two hours for a single church, or longer when there are more churches. Documents can be gathered in a central location and the total Inspection should not last longer than three hours in total.

Your visit should have three parts. There is the inspection of all the documents and contents of the church, comparing the one with the other, and there is the inspection of the church itself and the churchyard. You might, too, like to take the opportunity of paying a visit to other church property like a church hall. Thirdly you should take the opportunity also to discuss mission plans and parish vision with the wardens, and to offer thanks and encouragement.

The Follow-up

In some archdeaconries this is handled by the Archdeacon Office. If it is down to the Area Dean a follow up email should be sent to the churchwardens, encouraging them for the efforts they have put in to the visit and are giving to the running of the parish, and listing the matters you have discovered which require attention. It is important to send your email to the churchwardens who are responsible for the fabric and the contents but you should also send copies to the incumbent and, if appropriate, to the inspecting architect.

You should expect the churchwardens to reply to your email within, say, three months, telling you what they have done. If you have not heard by then, drop a gentle reminder and, if necessary, another one after six months.

The Inspection

NB. The Form to be used for Inspection will come from your Archdeacon. It will normally include such items as:

A. Church Records

Registers

You should inspect all the current registers to make sure they are being filled in correctly. You can also quickly pick up information here about the health of the parish.

You should also inspect registers which are no longer in use to ensure that they are kept securely and cleanly. If the baptism or burial registers are over 100 years old the law requires that they shall be deposited in the local Record Office. If they are still in use they may be kept open for 150 years but then have to be closed and deposited and a new register bought. Marriage registers, being the joint responsibility of the civil registrar, fall under different regulations.

Other Ancient Documents

The above rules about depositing also apply to all other ancient documents. It is therefore well worth "nosing around" the drawers and safes of the vestries to see what has been tucked away in corners and forgotten about. You can also discover mouldy hymn and prayer books and suggest that they are burnt.

Parish Terrier and Inventory

This is a legally required document which you should check carefully against the contents of the church. **It needs to be signed at the back by yourself, the incumbent and the Churchwardens.**

Church Electoral Roll

Minute Books of PCC and Annual Meetings

There are sometimes questions about how the minutes should be kept and it is useful to advise those who keep loose-leaf minutes to number the pages from one through to infinity and to put the name of the church and the date of the meeting on each page.

B. Finance

Annual Church Accounts

You could ask to have a look at these and talk with the churchwardens about any problems they may have. It is also worth checking that they have been prepared in accordance with the 1993 Charities Act and that the church treasurer has availed himself of one of the sessions of training on the Act which have been made available over the past couple of years.

Insurance Policies

It is useful to ask to see the actual policy by which you can check the adequacy of the church's cover. The employer's liability certificate of insurance should be displayed somewhere in the church.

Special Church Accounts

The 1993 Charities Act requires that Trusts and Accounts which provide income annually for the PCC or make payments on behalf of the PCC be mentioned in the accounts.

C. Church Contents

Church Plate

It is particularly important to examine this carefully and compare it with the Inventory. It is amazing how easily Elizabethan chalices go missing. You should ask to see any silver or other items of value that are normally kept for safety in the bank, or evidence of them.

Other Church Valuables

It is not only church plate that constitutes “articles of value”. Stained glass, monuments and furnishing of all kinds can also fall into this category. But do not talk too frequently in terms of monetary value or some of the churchwardens will want to sell it off to repair the church roof!

Photographs

All churches should have a photographic record of their valuable silver and furniture with details on the back of each photograph. There are frequent instances of stolen goods being recovered because of this simple practice. Two copies of the photographs, kept separately, is safest.

Altar Linen

Ask to see this. You will find the occasional church that uses a Kleenex for purificator. Occasionally the linen is not clean, so ask about laundry procedures.

D. Church Building and Churchyard

Quinquennial Inspection Report

It is helpful if you talk through this with the church wardens.

Church Log Book

This is a legal requirement.

Faculties

Ask them to show you the faculties they have been granted over the last few years. You can check them against work actually carried out. Look out for signs of work which you suspect has not been authorised by faculty.

The Churchyard

One of the most important things here is to check that they have an adequate grave-space plan (*not* a plan of memorial stones which is different). This will tell you whether the church or the undertaker has actual control of their churchyard. You may need to check whether the churchyard is closed by Order in Council and therefore legally in the charge of the local civil council for maintenance purposes.

The DAC encourages the maintenance of churchyards as places of wildlife conservation. It is difficult to get the issue taken seriously either by parishioners who become irritated when they find long grass barring their way to the grave they are tending or by the church members who, if they are interested at all, will just see the churchyard as another public garden to be kept spick and span.

Gutters and Down Pipes

The traditional *bête noire* of the Archdeacon, but experience suggests about half our churches at any one time will have some inadequacy in their water disposal. It can cause grave damage to stone and brick work faster than practically anything else.

Security

Do they lock the church?   Is the safe bolted or concreted in?   Where do they keep loose cash on the premises?   Where do they keep the keys?   This aspect requires constant vigilance.

Order in the Church

It can be helpful to use an outsider's fresh eye to make comments about the interior of the church – the dusty children's corner unused for decades, the possibilities for the space under the tower, the dirty cupboard full of unused rubbish, a vision for re-ordering of the Eucharist. Approached in a positive spirit, you can find yourself used over time in further informal, imaginative discussions.

Mission: Scope, Method & Impact

Inspections provide an opportunity to discuss with the key officers of the church the extent to which the priorities, plans and intended impact of the church are clear and agreed. Concern should be expressed if there is no shared understanding of this, however in some years competing priorities may get in the way (e.g. urgent finance or fabric concerns) and this should also be included on the form.

The Diocese encourages collaborative working and the inspection also gives an opportunity to discuss how the wider church is engaged with these priorities and how, gifts and skills are being encouraged and ministries developed. The development of ministry for children and young people and collaboration with the local school is also key, and signs of life here should also be included on the form.

The legal requirement is that inspections be made by Area Deans to the churches in their deanery at least once every three years. Done well, Inspections can engender a sense of mutual accountability, of problems being identified and addressed and most importantly give a focussed opportunity to thank and commend clergy and wardens for all they are doing well.

Handing over – good practice for clergy and churchwardens

Clergy

Changing from one Incumbent or priest-in-charge to another can be made a good deal easier if we establish a good practice in handing over.

1. You should leave for your successor:
   a. A copy of the up-to-date Electoral Roll, and if possible, a copy of the latest Local Authority Electoral Register and any appropriate maps
   b. The latest Quinquennial Report
   c. Parochial fees to date (for the year).

2. Parish files should be in good order, up-to-date with information and containing any relevant correspondence for ongoing matters, e.g. churchyard, faculties, etc. A copy of the last return of Fees and Income should be included.

3. You should ensure that all Parish Registers are complete. Any relevant follow-up notes in respect of baptisms, weddings and funerals will be useful.

4. Church wardens should be informed of arrangements for weddings, funerals and baptisms, especially during the interregnum, and particularly details about the reading of banns.

5. You should leave details of parish trusts, charities and discretionary funds, details of parish registers and where they are kept (or deposited).

6. Any Safeguarding files should be handed to the Area Dean to be kept in a locked cabinet for safekeeping until they can be given to the new Incumbent.

7. Leave details of any *ex officio* appointments (e.g. school governorships), trusteeships.

8. It is helpful to provide a list of meetings that the priest is expected to attend.

9. Leave a list of sick and housebound people, and those who receive Holy Communion at home.

10. It is helpful for a new Incumbent to be briefed about pastoral situations where these are ongoing (see note relating to Data Protection Act). Sometimes when there have been ‘problems’ with individuals, it is kinder to allow new priests to make their own relationships and to make their own judgements.

11. It is helpful to have notes about policy for worship within the parish/benefices, with a list of choir members, servers and Lay Ministers of Holy Communion. A new Incumbent will want to meet any licensed lay ministers (LLMs) as early as possible.

12. It is the responsibility of the incumbent/priest-in-charge to arrange clergy/LLMs to cover services whilst he/she is still legally the incumbent/priest-in-charge – see 15.

13. It is important for the new Incumbent to have a copy of the latest periodic Inspection report on the benefice house, together with any helpful notes on the running of the house, e.g. peculiarities with the heating system etc.

14. Lastly, before you leave, go through the Inventory with the churchwardens and sign it. Hand over any keys to the churchwardens and obtain a receipt detailing the keys deposited with them. Read the gas/electricity/water meters (keep a note for yourself and give a copy to the churchwardens). Inform the telephone suppliers – they will normally keep a number for up to a year. Make arrangements for calls to the clergy house to be diverted or leave an answering machine message.

Action for churchwardens

15. The Churchwardens should meet with the Area Dean to arrange clergy/LLM cover for services once the interregnum has begun – see 12.

16. Whenever possible, we like to let the parsonage house. This provides a valuable income to carry out works to all parsonage houses, can help security and helps to keep down the Parish Share. The law requires that properties are let for a minimum of six months and as the average length of an interregnum is nine months this will normally allow time for a six-month let and the necessary works to be carried out.

17. An early opportunity should be given for the wardens to meet with the new Incumbent and to go through the terrier, log book and inventory. The incoming Incumbent and churchwardens should sign the inventory. Keys should be given to the new Incumbent and a signed record kept of which keys are in his/her possession.

18. There should be an early meeting with the Treasurer to acquaint the new Incumbent about the financial affairs of the parish, and to let him/her know about any special Trusts, Discretionary and Charitable funds.

19. Familiarise yourselves with the rules about churchyard memorials – the current Regulations are on the Diocesan website. It is not unknown for people to take advantage of an interregnum to introduce memorials that are not allowed.

20. Familiarise yourselves with the duties of churchwardens as sequestrators.

21. Discuss with the new incumbent/priest-in-charge if he/she needs to notify (i.e. register) under the Data Protection Act 1998. He/she will need to do so if pastoral information/opinions are held on file and not just factual information relating to names and addresses of parishioners. Advice is available from the Diocesan Registrar.

USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

Churchwardens will find it helpful to have an appropriate handbook

**The Churchwardens Handbook – A Practical Guide* by the Ven. Ian Russell, Kevin Mayhew (ISBN 184003534X) * highly recommended

Practical Church Management by James Behrens, Gracewing, (ISBN 0852444710)

A Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors by Kenneth M Macmorran and Timothy Briden, Mowbrays, London (ISBN 0264674863)

Diocesan regulations regarding churchyards etc. can be found on the Diocesan Website www.oxford.anglican.org

You may also find the following booklets helpful:

So the Vicar is leaving published by ACORA. Obtained from the Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwicks. CV8 2LZ (£4 incl. postage)

Understanding the Interregnum (P67) by Tony Bradley, Grove Booklets £2.50 (ISBN 1851743251)

The Area Bishop or Archdeacon will meet with churchwardens to talk them through the vacancy procedure which is governed by various legal procedures. The Parish Development Adviser may be able to offer valuable help with work on the Parish Profile and looking to the future.

If you need further help please don't hesitate to contact the Area Bishop, Archdeacon, PDA or Diocesan Buildings department. They are there to help you and want to do the best for your parish and the church.

General

Behrens, J (2014) *Practical Church Management* Gracewing

Briden, T & MacMorran K.M, (2006) *A Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors*, Continuum

Russell, I, (2000) *The Church Warden's Handbook,* Kevin Meyhew

Pitchford, J (2003) *An ABC for the PCC,* Geoffrey Chapman

Dudley,D, Hands,D & Rounding, V (2003) *Churchwardens: A Survival Guide* SPCK

Deanery Resource Unit is part of Parish and People, The Old Mill, Spetisbury, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 9DF – www.parishandpeople.org.uk

Parrot, David: Your Church and the Law: A simple explanation

www.parishresources.org.uk

Synodical Legislation:

Many of these can be found at www.churchofengland.org

- The Parochial Register and Records Measure 1978
- Synodical Government Measure 1969
- Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991
- Church representation rules
- The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011
- The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 esp. Sections 9-13

Diocesan publications

For guidance and latest information on Parish Share see https://www.oxford.anglican.org/support-services/finance/parish-share/

Latest Deanery Synod operation – https://www.oxford.anglican.org/who-we-are/governance/deanery-synods/

Ecclesiastical Trusts

Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Limited [DT(O)L] is "the diocesan authority" in the Diocese of Oxford. It holds property in trust, for which matters can be complex.

Real Estate

- Under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 and the Incumbents and Churchwardens (Trusts) Measure 1964, any real estate that is acquired must be vested in the diocesan authority. However, the PCC or Incumbent and Churchwardens continue to be responsible for administering and managing the property. Where property is vested in the diocesan authority, the PCC or Incumbent and Churchwardens may not sell, lease, let, exchange, charge or take any legal proceedings with respect to the property without the prior consent of the diocesan authority.

- PCCs, separate PCC trusts and Incumbent & Churchwarden trusts are charities, although currently are not required to be registered with the Charity Commission for most normal purposes. As a result, trustees must observe the general principles of charity law. In addition, they must work within the framework of ecclesiastical law. The Diocesan Registrar has produced a helpful booklet that explains how the Charities Act 1993 affects ecclesiastical charities.

- Before the diocesan authority can consider giving its consent to a transaction, written advice must be obtained from the appropriate person, in accordance with the Charities Acts and certain resolutions must be passed, including that the diocesan authority must be indemnified against all costs of the transaction. Specimen forms of resolution and further advice can be obtained from the Trusts Administrator.

- When allowing a property to be occupied, consideration must also be given to safety matters. There is legislation for which there must be compliance. In particular the provisions of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1994, the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 and, the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 1993 apply.

- Sometimes, when a sale has been completed, the sale proceeds will form a "permanent endowment", with the diocesan authority continuing to have a role under the Measures, to hold the capital whilst passing the income to the managing trustees to use. This is one way in which the diocesan authority has a role in seeing that the Charity Commission's guidance is followed: in its booklet CC3 'The Essential Trustee' the Commission states "In particular, trustees need to ensure that property which is permanent endowment is used in a way that produces enough money for expenditure while at the same time safeguarding the value of the investment." (Charity Commission publications can be obtained via the helpline: 0845 300 0218 3330123 or the internet: www.charity-commission.gov.uk)

- In other cases, there is no such restriction. In every case, the terms of the underlying Governing Document must be examined to discover how the proceeds of any sale may be used.

- It is most important that the consent of the diocesan authority is obtained where required and the correct legal documents produced. Otherwise the legal costs could be high and the local trustees are responsible for the payment of all fees, including those of the Diocesan Authority. The Trusts Administrator must be contacted at an early stage when considering property transactions, to get advice on the necessary requirements and consents.

Financial Trusts

- Under the Measures, capital funds that are permanent endowment are required to be held by the diocesan authority. These may derive from a legacy, bequest or a gift. The PCC or Incumbent and Churchwardens are the "managing trustees" of the trust. They have the responsibility for administering the trust. This includes decisions on the investment of the capital and expenditure of the income. Therefore DT(O)L has resolved that the income of these trust funds should be mandated to an account directly in the control of the managing trustees. This could be a CBF deposit account or an account with a local bank. The main advantage to having local control of the income is that funds will be available more quickly. Trustees must advise the Trusts Administrator of any details of a bank account change.

- In relation to the funds that are held in trust, an annual balance sheet is produced by the Trusts accountant and is sent to the trustees by the Trusts Administrator, usually at the end of January each year. This is an established process and it is not necessary for trustees to request an Annual Statement.

Ecclesiastical/Educational Trusts

The site upon which a Church of England School and its playground are built should be held in trust. The details of the school trust, including the identity of the trustees often date back to the original school and very often the trustees are the Incumbent and Churchwardens. However there may be a modern Charity Commission Scheme to update the school trust whereby the trustees would be the Incumbent plus one trustee chosen by the PCC and one by the Governing Body. In some cases DT(O)L or ODBF has become the custodian trustee and so whilst not having to give consent to a land transaction, must consent to being a party to the relevant legal documentation. Whatever the make up of trusteeship, the Trusts Administrator at DCH can always assist with advice concerning land transactions.

The church school trustees do not have a responsibility for the maintenance of school property whilst a school is in existence. However if a land transaction is proposed, e.g. lease of land to a Pre-school; grant of a wayleave; sale of surplus land, then the trustees must obtain appropriate advice to meet the requirements of the Charities Acts and having considered that advice, give consent to the proposal. The appropriate consent via DT(O)L is also required.

If a school transfers to another site or closes, then the trustees become responsible for the land and buildings. The property will require disposal, usually by sale. Again the Trusts Administrator can assist the trustees with the process.

Contact details for the Trusts Administrator: telephone 01865 208203
e-mail caroline.dyer@oxford.anglican.org

The Diocesan Perspective

The Diocese of Oxford is the Church of England in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Together, we are the Church, called and sent by God as disciples of Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. We are a living, growing network of more than a thousand congregations, chaplaincies and schools.

Together, we are called to be more Christ-like: to be the Church of the Beatitudes: contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world.

Together, we work with God and with others for the common good in every place in one of the great crossroads of the world.

Together, we are called to proclaim the Christian faith afresh in this generation with joy and hope and love.

Together, we are called to dream dreams and see visions of what could be, and see those visions come to birth. [*Taken from the Flourishing in Ministry Booklet.]*

The common vison focal areas currently are:

Making a bigger difference in the world and serving the poor

Growing new churches and new congregations

Serving every school

Putting discipleship at the heart of our common life

Sharing faith and growing the church

Celebrating and blessing Milton Keynes

Children and young people

On photographs in profiles

The guidance for photos of children within the profile are as follows:-

- Group photos of children are ok to include with the parents' permission
- Avoid individual portraits
- There should be nothing included which could possibly help to identify the child at all – i.e. school uniform, name badge, accompanying text
- If they are no longer members of the church they should not be included
- If the picture includes a child that is now grown up and still a member of the church, you need the young person's permission (over 16)

A Guide to Welcoming your new Minister

Below you will find a list of questions to enable you, the wardens and parish to think what level of introduction to the benefice / parish your new minister would benefit from, whatever their age or experience.

People

Who are the key people the Minister needs to meet early on, eg

- ☐ Can you provide a *Who's Who* of key people in the life of the church, with their telephone numbers, and the responsibilities they have?
- ☐ Is there a resident organist and/or who is responsible for the music in worship?
- ☐ Who orders candles, wafers etc and prepares the church for a communion (if there isn't a sacristan)?
- ☐ Who is it that knows the story of the church well – its history, key people and events?
- ☐ Who are the people (or organisations), both in the church and in the wider community, who exercise "power" or influence and the minister needs to meet sooner rather than later?
- ☐ Who has responsibilities in the parish for child protection and where are the files kept?
- ☐ Who are the local undertakers – names, addresses and contact details and where are is/are the crematoria / churchyard (if the church graveyard is closed)

Practicalities

- ☐ Have you arranged to meet with the new minister to go through the Terrier, Log Book, Inventory and Churchyard plan? (***Note*** Minister and churchwardens should also sign the Inventory).
- ☐ Have you arranged to hand over keys? (***Note***: your new Minister should sign a record of which keys are in his/her possession.)
- ☐ What financial information would it be helpful for your new minister to know early on? eg, do they need to meet with the Treasurer(s) about the financial affairs of the parish, and to let him/her know about any local Trusts, Discretionary and Charitable funds.
- ☐ Do you have a list of helpful / important telephone numbers for the minister, eg doctors, local schools, police, plumbers, electricians etc
- ☐ Could you provide a local map with some of the key facilities marked, eg residential / care homes, schools, supermarkets, petrol stations, pubs, restaurants or takeaways
- ☐ Could you provide the minister with a copy of the electoral roll, a list of wider church community contacts, last year's annual report and key orders of service/service booklets
- ☐ From the registers could you compile details and contact information for recent and forthcoming baptisms, funerals or weddings?
- ☐ Does your new minister have the latest Diocesan Yearbook and is s/he aware of the latest rules and regulations on churchyard memorials and other important policies and guidelines?
- ☐ Have you discussed the issue of Data Protection? (*Parish clergy may need to register with the Data Protection Commissioner as 'data controllers' in their own right. Information concerning baptismal/confirmation records constitutes 'special category data' within the meaning of the Act*.)

Getting into the Role

What does the minister need to know about the church, eg

- ☐ Are there any outstanding faculties or churchyard issues (either applications or work to be done)?
- ☐ What are the current pastoral concerns that need to be shared?
- ☐ What are the “traditions” which are particularly important to your church?
- ☐ Are there any unresolved conflicts or other human relationship dynamics that should be shared? (including any “skeletons in the closet”)
- ☐ Are there any on-going safeguarding issues?
- ☐ What is the biggest mistake the new minister could make in the first 3 months?!

What to do before your incumbent leaves
October 2018

It will be important for the churchwardens to sit down with the vicar and discuss a number of issues.

1. **Information**. The vicar is often at the centre of the information network of a parish. S/he may well know the big picture, where others only know bits of it. It is important that information relating to the running of the parish is written down. A ring binder is often a good idea, in which it can be noted, for example, who normally orders the communion wine, who has the spare set of boiler room keys, what part does the local council play on Remembrance Sunday. This information folder can be kept in the parish office or vestry and will be enormously useful both during the vacancy and to the new incumbent.

2. **Unfinished work**. The vicar may have been involved in pieces of work which they will not be able to complete before their departure. These may include large projects, such as repairs/re-ordering or other smaller things. It is important for everyone to be clear what stage each piece of work has reached and whether any further action needs to be taken during the vacancy.

3. **Pastoral care**. If the vicar has been working with a pastoral care team, then any ongoing concerns can be shared with them. If the vicar has been doing much of the pastoral care by him/herself, then it is a good idea for any special concerns to be shared with a designated person so that the new incumbent can be properly briefed. Occasionally there are issues which are of a highly confidential nature and may be best held out of the parish, in which case the Area Dean is a good person to talk to.

4. **Safeguarding.** During an interregnum the PCC must, working with the churchwardens, ensure that all information about safeguarding matters is securely stored before passing the information on to the new incumbent. The departing incumbent must give all safeguarding information to the Parish Safeguarding Officer who can pass the information on to the new incumbent when he/she takes up his new role.

5. **Finance**. The treasurer should ensure that all expenses owing to the vicar are paid up to date. If the vicar has been doing the fees administration for the parish, then this should be handed over. In this case, the vacancy may be a good opportunity to designate a fees treasurer and take this burden off the shoulders of the new incumbent.

6. **Before leaving**, the vicar needs to

- Ensure the wardens know the whereabouts of parish registers, baptism & wedding certificates.
- Hand over all keys, parish records, confidential files etc.
- Brief the wardens on the different areas of parish life. A sheet entitled ‘Who does what …’ can be helpful here.
- Hand over any child protection and safeguarding paperwork/forms to the Parish Safeguarding Officer that they may be held securely during the vacancy.
- Make sure that all vicarage utility meters are read and the wardens as well as the utility companies are given the readings.
- Ensure the vicarage is empty of all furniture and rubbish. (This is important since the parish has to pay for the removal of anything left behind.)

SIMPLIFYING PARISH ADMINISTRATION THROUGH PASTORAL REORGANISATION (or How to have fewer meetings)

Most people in church want to be busy with the mission of the church, proclaiming the gospel and serving the needy. And they very often want to be doing this with their brothers and sisters from a nearby church. Yet sometimes it seems as if all the structures of the Church of England are designed to frustrate their efforts. Throughout the diocese, people and churches are finding new and creative ways to work together more effectively, and one of these is to combine parishes into a larger multi-church grouping.

If this is to work well, parishes must have an open and trusting relationship, and probably will already be doing things together. It is not a change that can be introduced quickly, or without carefully thinking through the implications.

This leaflet explains a little more about the benefits of doing this, some of the things that you will need to take into account.

What is a parish?
A parish is defined by its geographic boundaries. But it is more than a shape on the map: A parish is a legal entity (or body corporate): it can own money and enter into contracts. All legal, administrative and Governance matters are referred to in the legislation by reference to the parish (and not the church or the benefice). For example, the following are all *parish* responsibilities:

- Annual Parish Church meetings
- Having at least four PCC meetings a year
- Appointing a PCC secretary and treasurer
- Elections to diocesan synod
- Reporting on finances
- Statistical reporting
- Employment regulation
- Safeguarding
- Health and safety
- Data protection (GDPR).

A benefice may have one or more ministers and be made up of one or more parishes.

A parish may have one or more churches.

Having a smaller number of larger parishes can reduce this administrative burden of people and clergy, and free people up for other areas of mission and ministry.

Matters to consider
The two main implications of uniting parishes are finance, and governance (elections). There is also the small, but often significant question of what the united parish will be called. The national Church have provided guidance on the financial implications for parishes. Briefly, as a single legal body, they will be required to produce a single set of integrated accounts. This does not prevent them having “restricted” funds, where a donor wishes money to be used on a particular building, or for a specified purpose.

As to the name, the new parish can be called anything that people can agree on. Sometimes, it makes sense to acknowledge the history of the parish by naming all the constituent elements: for example “Waddesdon, Westcott, Over Winchendon and Fleet Marston”. In other places it makes sense to find a new, shorter name, for example the DAMASCUS parish (which is made up of the former parishes of Drayton, Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon).

Governance and Representation in a Single Parish benefice
The standard arrangement is for a parish to have one PCC responsible for everything. However, other arrangements are possible.

- The electoral roll is normally for the whole parish. If the churches and parishes are of very different sizes, it may be desirable to mark on the electoral roil the church normally attended by each member. The constitution of the PCC can then be revised to set up minimum and maximum representations from each church. They can also set restrictions on how Deanery Synod members are to be elected. (Note that, because the number of representatives is calculated from the new combined electoral roll, there may be fewer representatives than before, and possibly fewer representatives than churches.)
- Churches may want their own local committee. The legal name of these is District Church Councils. Typically they might want to take responsibility for minor repairs and maintenance, cleaning, local rotas, open days, social events. They can be chaired by a lay person, and may even have members who are not on the electoral roll, for example, friends of the building. The PCC can pass to them some, but not all of their responsibilities (see Appendix II).
- ***District (Church Councils) must be legally created if they are to have responsibilities of PCCs passed to them.***

Governance and Representation a Multi-Parish benefice
In a benefice with more than one parish, there are still ways in which co-ordination can be improved. -- typically a Joint PCC or benefice council, or in the case of a team ministry, a team council.

An alternative (and practical way) to co-ordinate one or more PCCs is for them to meet at the same place and at the same time for one or more of their meetings each year. These meetings are legally PCC meetings of each individual parish (and should be advertised and minuted as such, with any votes being counted by individual PCCs), but they may be able to agree jointly on, for example, patterns of worship., missional activity, policies on baptism or children receiving communion. But they must not be described as a joint PCC (which is the name of a legally set up body described above.)

It is rarely desirable to have three layers of governance with benefice, parish and church councils.

Joint PCCS, benefice Councils and Team must be legally created if they are to have any responsibilities of PCCs passed to them.

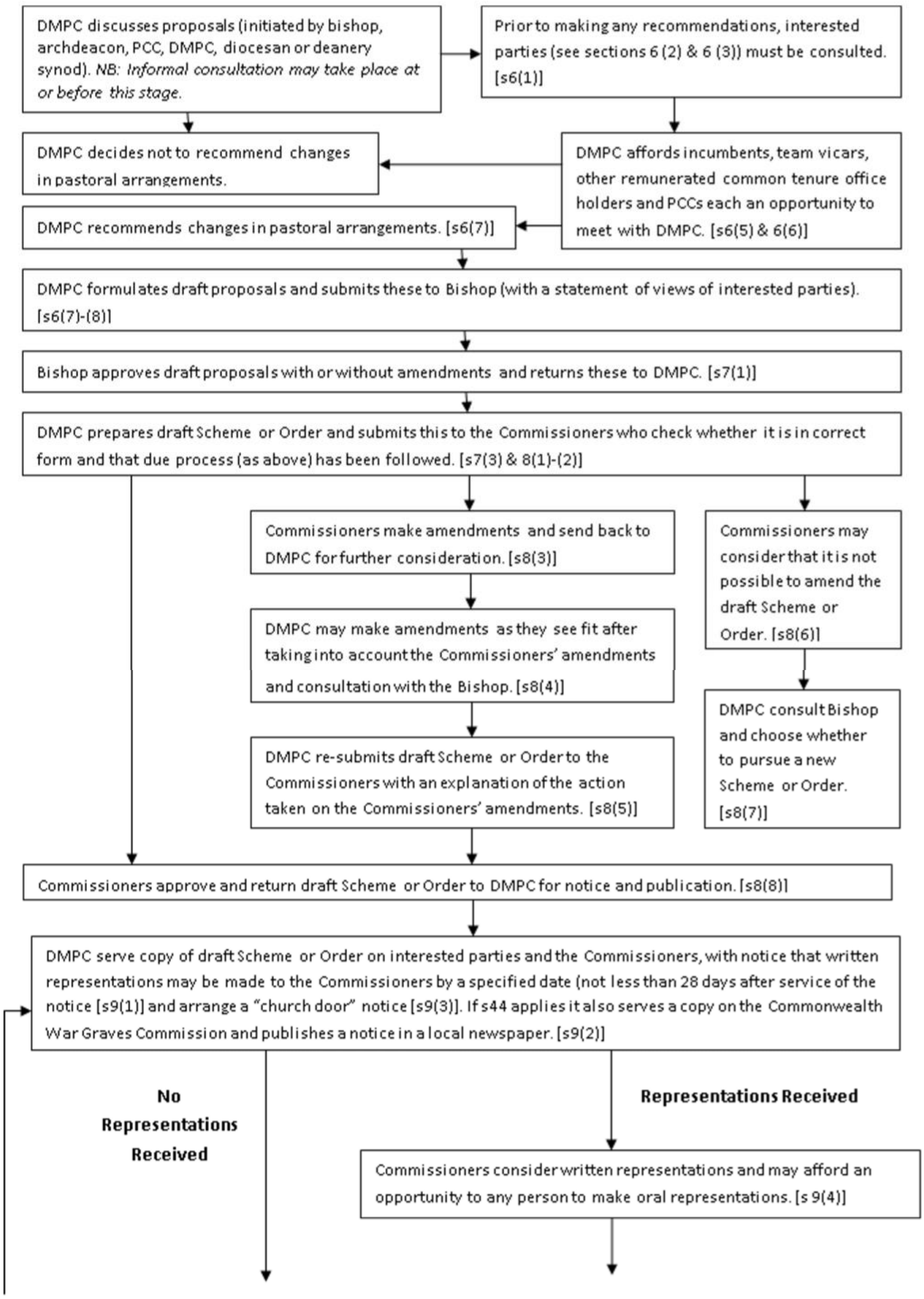
Creating a new constitution
it is necessary to decide

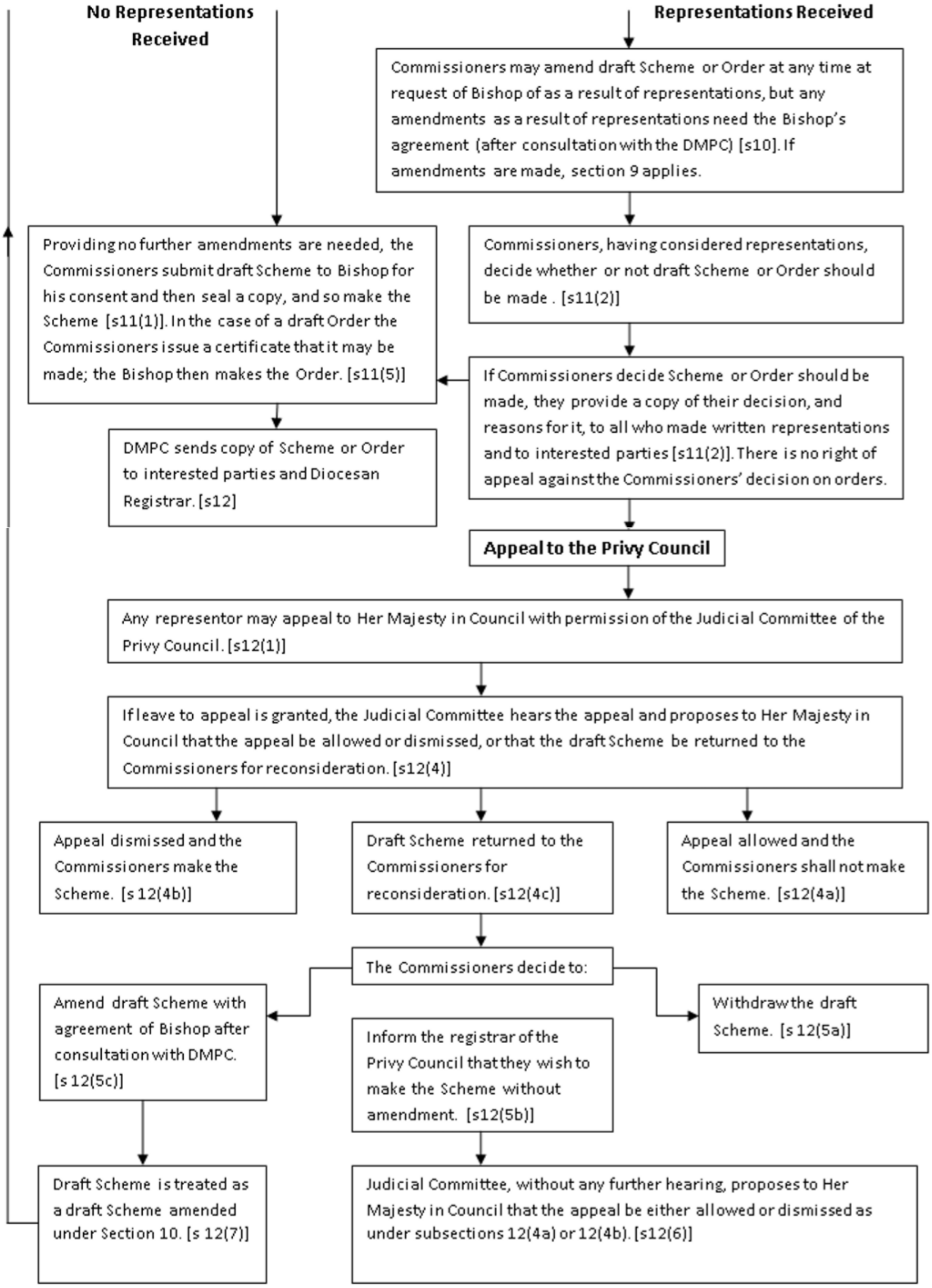
- What bodies are to be established
- What the membership of each body is (ex officio, elected, co-opted) and their terms of office
- How the chair is to be appointed
- Meetings, procedures, responsibilities – these can be listed explicitly or given to the PCC to agree each year.

It is also desirable to be clear as to what each body is for. Appendix II lists some typical activities of PCCs, (although it is not comprehensive) and shows which cannot be delegated, and gives space to record which matters are to be passed to another body.

Once this is agreed, the pastoral secretary will give advice as to how it can be brought into being. ***Variations like this must be renewed every five years otherwise they lapse and cease to have any legal validity.***

Appendix 1.4 – Part 3 Progress of a Pastoral Scheme or Order flowchart




No Representations Received
Representations Received
Commissioners may amend draft Scheme or Order at any time at request of Bishop of as a result of representations, but any amendments as a result of representations need the Bishop's agreement (after consultation with the DMPC) [s10]. If amendments are made, section 9 applies.
Providing no further amendments are needed, the Commissioners submit draft Scheme to Bishop for his consent and then seal a copy, and so make the Scheme [s11(1)]. In the case of a draft Order the Commissioners issue a certificate that it may be made; the Bishop then makes the Order. [s11(5)]
Commissioners, having considered representations, decide whether or not draft Scheme or Order should be made . [s11(2)]
If Commissioners decide Scheme or Order should be made, they provide a copy of their decision, and reasons for it, to all who made written representations and to interested parties [s11(2)]. There is no right of appeal against the Commissioners' decision on orders.
DMPC sends copy of Scheme or Order to interested parties and Diocesan Registrar. [s12]
Appeal to the Privy Council
Any representor may appeal to Her Majesty in Council with permission of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. [s12(1)]
If leave to appeal is granted, the Judicial Committee hears the appeal and proposes to Her Majesty in Council that the appeal be allowed or dismissed, or that the draft Scheme be returned to the Commissioners for reconsideration. [s12(4)]
Appeal dismissed and the Commissioners make the Scheme. [s 12(4b)]
Draft Scheme returned to the Commissioners for reconsideration. [s12(4c)]
Appeal allowed and the Commissioners shall not make the Scheme. [s12(4a)]
The Commissioners decide to:
Amend draft Scheme with agreement of Bishop after consultation with DMPC. [s 12(5c)]
Inform the registrar of the Privy Council that they wish to make the Scheme without amendment. [s12(5b)]
Withdraw the draft Scheme. [s 12(5a)]
Draft Scheme is treated as a draft Scheme amended under Section 10. [s 12(7)]
Judicial Committee, without any further hearing, proposes to Her Majesty in Council that the appeal be either allowed or dismissed as under subsections 12(4a) or 12(4b). [s12(6)]

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