

The Dioceses Commission has given its approval to revive the See* of Islington paving the way for a new bishop to lead on church planting within the Diocese of London.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has written to the Commission expressing his strong support for the new See. The Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, formally submitted a proposal to the Commission laying out the support of both the Diocesan Synod and the Bishop's Council.

Most bishops exercise their ministry within a defined geographical area. The proposal to revive the See of Islington is innovative as the bishop would hold a particular brief for church-planting initiatives primarily in the Diocese of London but to provide advice for other dioceses across England as invited to do so by the local bishop.

The Commission first looked at the Bishop of London's proposal to revive the See of Islington at its meeting in September last year before it was being discussed by the London Diocesan Synod.

The Bishop of London has emphasised that the new bishop would be accountable to him and be part of the London Diocese's senior team, playing his/her part in carrying out episcopal functions, such as confirmations, in the diocese and in particularly in supporting clergy in pioneer ministry.

Professor Michael Clarke, Chair of the Dioceses Commission, said: "The Commission looked very carefully at the Bishop of London's proposal, and, in the light of clarification of the intended role of the new bishop, gave it a green light. As with our recent scheme radically reshaping dioceses in West Yorkshire, we are keen to play our part in adapting the Church's structures to meet current mission needs."

Following the Commission's consent, the way is now open to appoint someone with a view to the new bishop being consecrated later in the year.

See also Diocese of London <http://www.london.anglican.org/articles/the-revival-of-the-see-of-islington/>

Notes for editors

The Dioceses Commission has particular responsibility for episcopal oversight across the Church of England and suffragan sees, such as this one, cannot normally be filled without its agreement. The creation of wholly new sees would nevertheless also require the consent of the General Synod. In this case the See of Islington had been created in the late 19th Century but had been left unfilled since 1923.

Church-planting was given a stimulus by the seminal 2004 Church Report *Mission Shaped Church*. This report recognised that 'the existing parochial system alone is no longer able fully to deliver its underlying mission purpose...' and that 'a variety of integrated missionary approaches is required' with 'a mixed economy of parish churches and network churches.' It described church plants as 'creating new communities of Christian faith as part of the mission of God to express God's kingdom in every geographic and cultural context.' It is estimated that there are c.1,000 such Fresh Expressions across the Church of England attended by c.30,000 people.