

In July 2014, the General Synod approved legislation enabling women to become bishops and removing all gender distinctions in the canons of the Church of England in relation to the ministry of bishops, priest and deacons.

As part of the package of proposals of which the legislation was part, the House of Bishops agreed a Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (GS Misc 1076) was established to sustain the diversity of the Church of England and the mutual flourishing of its constituent parts.

The Declaration embodies Five Guiding Principles which were endorsed by the General Synod.

Standing Commission on the House of Bishops' Declaration

The Commission supports the House of Bishops and dioceses with monitoring the implementation of the Declaration and the 5 Guiding Principles

[Learn more](#)

Independent Reviewer

The Independent Reviewer rules on concerns and disputes over the operation of the House's Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests

[Learn more](#)

The Five Guiding Principles

The Five Guiding Principles were written to accompany the House of Bishops' Declaration to provide some basic parameters to help those in the Church of England with different views on the ordination of women as bishops and priests to continue to relate to each other within one church.

They are as follows:

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

A resource for study, written by the [Faith and Order Commission](#), can be [found here](#).

Resolution

The House's Declaration sets out arrangements under which parishes can take advantage of arrangements available to those whose theological conviction leads them to seek the priestly or episcopal ministry of men. Under these, Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) can pass a resolution in the following recommended form:

'This PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.'

Further guidance about passing these Resolutions is set out in paragraphs 6-12 of the [House of Bishop's Guidance Note \(GS Misc 1077\)](#).

Regulations

Following the vote on the legislation on the consecration of women as bishops in July 2014, the House of Bishops was required, under Canon C 29, to make [Regulations](#) prescribing a procedure for the resolution of disputes arising from the arrangements for which the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests makes provision. These include the provision of an Independent Reviewer.

More information can be found on the role of the [Independent Reviewer here](#).

Relevant documents

- [GS Misc 1076 - House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests](#) (354.23 KB)
- [GS Misc 1077 - House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests \(Guidance note\)](#) (241.05 KB)
- [GS Misc 1087 - The Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests \(Resolution of Disputes Procedure\) Regulations 2014](#) (155.39 KB)
- [The Five Guiding Principles: A Resource for Study](#) (638.16 KB)

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