

A series of changes have been announced to the names of bishops who offer extended episcopal care to parishes that cannot accept the priestly or episcopal ministry of women.

Under these changes, now approved by the Dioceses Commission, the Bishop of Maidstone Rod Thomas's successor will now be known as the Bishop of Ebbsfleet.

Meanwhile the role of the previous Bishop of Ebbsfleet - whose ministry was to traditional catholic parishes - will move to become that of the Bishop of Oswestry in the Diocese of Lichfield.

Bishop Rod, who will retire in October, has had a special national ministry since 2015 providing a voice in the College of Bishops and advocacy for those who cannot, on the grounds of complementarian evangelical theology, accept the priestly or episcopal ministry of women.

The future Bishop of Ebbsfleet, who will take on this responsibility when Bishop Rod retires, will live either in London or the M4 corridor for ease of travel and will minister nationally to complementarian evangelical parishes.

The combined effect of these changes means that the See of Maidstone will become vacant and could potentially revert to local use within the Diocese of Canterbury in the future.

Up until now, Bishops of Ebbsfleet - one of the Church of England's three Provincial Episcopal Visitors, who minister to traditional catholic parishes - have been responsible primarily for churches in the western half of the Church of England's Province of Canterbury.

Consultations on a successor to Jonathan Goodall, the previous Bishop of Ebbsfleet, strongly suggested that it would be helpful for the new postholder be rooted in a diocese.

The Dioceses Commission has therefore agreed that Lichfield provides a good location for this ministry to this part of the Province and that Bishop Jonathan's successor should therefore be designated as the Bishop of Oswestry.

- The **Provincial Episcopal Visitors** - the Bishops Beverley, Richborough and Ebbsfleet - were created as part of the arrangements in 1992 which first enabled women to be ordained as priests.
- The **See of Maidstone** was appointed in 2015 in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests 2014 and associated guidance, to provide a voice within the College of Bishops for those within the Church of England who cannot, on the grounds of complementary theology, accept the priestly or episcopal ministry of women and to act as an advocate for those who hold that position.
- The **See of Oswestry** was one of a number of sees created in the 19th Century but never filled.
- Further [information about the ministry of the current Bishop of Maidstone](#)

- Further [information about The Society](#) (more fully, The Society under the patronage of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda).

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