



Judiciary

The Appointments Committee of the Church of England has appointed the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Males (Lord Justice Males) as President of Tribunals under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. He succeeds the Rt Hon Dame Sarah Asplin DBE (Lady Justice Asplin) who served with distinction in the role of President of Tribunals from 2018 to 2024.

Sir Stephen Males has been a judge of the Court of Appeal since 2019 and was previously a High Court judge. He is a member of the Court of Ecclesiastical Causes Reserved and a Lay Canon of Rochester Cathedral. In addition to being President of Tribunals he will also serve as Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission.

The appointment was made following consultation with the Dean of the Arches and Auditor, Morag Ellis KC. She has welcomed Sir Stephen's appointment saying,

"I am very pleased that Sir Stephen Males has accepted appointment as President of Tribunals. This is a crucial role under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 and is intended to continue under the Clergy Conduct Measure currently before the General Synod. Sir Stephen, as a senior member of the secular judiciary, will bring a wealth of experience and be well placed to see that current good practice in the secular courts informs the work and practice of courts and tribunals that exercise jurisdiction in relation to clergy conduct. He succeeds Dame Sarah Asplin to whom the Church owes a great deal for her exemplary service in the role of President of Tribunals."

The President of Tribunals will continue to be assisted by the Deputy President, His Honour David Turner KC.

Notes:

The President of Tribunals is required to undertake a number of specific and important functions under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 (CDM). They include:

- reviewing decisions by a bishop or archbishop to dismiss a complaint at the preliminary scrutiny stage;
- reviewing decisions by a bishop or archbishop to take no further action on a complaint;
- being consulted by a bishop or archbishop about proposed penalties following criminal proceedings or a matrimonial breakdown;
- acting as Chair of a disciplinary tribunal (although in practice this is delegated to one of the legally qualified persons who have been nominated to the relevant provincial panel);
- appointing the Chair and the other members of disciplinary tribunals and courts of the Vicars-General;

dealing with appeals against the exercise of a bishop's power to suspend clergy under the CDM;

- reviewing decisions by both archbishops on the inclusion of clergy on the Archbishops' list established by the CDM;
- reviewing decisions by bishops directing clergy to undergo risk assessments.

The Appointments Committee must consult with the Dean of the Arches and Auditor – as the lead ecclesiastical judge – before making an appointment.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/rt-hon-sir-stephen-males-be-new-president-tribunals>