

## REPORT TO THE GENERAL SYNOD

### PROPOSAL FROM THE BISHOP OF LEEDS TO RENAME THE SEE OF RICHMOND TO KIRKSTALL

#### Report from the Dioceses Commission

1. In July 2013 the General Synod gave overwhelming approval to the Reorganisation Scheme creating the new Diocese of Leeds (from the former dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds, and Wakefield). One of the features of the new diocese was that it would have five episcopal areas – Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds, Ripon and Wakefield. While there would be designated area bishops for four of the sees, the original scheme was predicated on the Bishop of Leeds also acting as area bishop for the Leeds area.
2. In April 2015 the Commission agreed to a proposal from the Bishop of Leeds – strongly supported by the Bishop’s Council and the Archbishop of York – that the Suffragan See of **Richmond** be revived to provide additional episcopal capacity within the new diocese and particularly within the Leeds Episcopal Area. The revival of an existing see did not require Synodical approval and it enabled much-needed extra episcopal support to be put swiftly in place. The Ven Paul Slater was consecrated as Bishop of Richmond in Ripon Cathedral on 19 July 2015.
3. Part of the rationale was to provide transitional help to the Bishop of Leeds as the new diocese found its feet, particularly as the Leeds Episcopal Area did not have a designated area bishop, and given the Bishop of Leeds’ own strategic role in shaping the new diocese (in addition to national responsibilities in line with those for diocesan bishops, including membership of the House of Lords and the Co-Chairing of the Meissen Commission).
4. The life of the new diocese has evolved to the extent that the Bishop of Richmond has now been given delegated responsibility for the Leeds Area on a par with that for the Area Bishops of the other four areas. In March 2017 the Bishop of Leeds signalled his intention to seek permission to change the name of the See to **Kirkstall**. Richmond is a market town in North Yorkshire which, while within the Diocese of Leeds, is 56 miles away. Kirkstall – the seat of an ancient monastic foundation – is within the City of Leeds (not far from Headingley Cricket Ground). The Bishop argued that the change would

‘...assist our credibility and identity outside the Church of England...what makes organisational sense in the diocese...makes no sense beyond it’ and that,

“...locally it is clear that the Bishop of Leeds cannot run an episcopal area such as Leeds, do the regional, national and international work, [and] hold the diocese together..... I did consider the Richmond role to be transitional, but it is hard to see how the diocesan bishop can do what the role requires. (The Leeds Episcopal Area felt short-changed by not having an area bishop dedicated to it, especially given the way the areas are set up to work.) We can

afford the extra bishop in our budget. The name change is for missional purposes – there is confusion locally about who is responsible for what and the titles confuse matters...”

5. The process for changing the name of a See is governed by s.11 of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007, as set out in ANNEX 1. It involves consultation with the Commission, and the approval of both the Leeds Diocesan Synod and the General Synod.
6. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary of the Commission met with the Bishop of Leeds and the Bishop of Richmond in Leeds on 22 June 2017 and discussed the proposal (which had the full support of the Leeds Diocesan Board). In the light of this discussion the Commission formally confirmed in September that it accepted the mission case for a change of name at this time. Its agreement to the change of name is without prejudice to any decision that the Commission might take about filling the See after the current Bishop of Kirkstall’s term of office ends, when it would still anticipate reaching a view on whether to refill the renamed See in the light of a submission from the diocesan bishop in the usual way. Changing the name does not in itself cut across the Commission’s statutory entitlement to keep oversight arrangements under review, as for any other suffragan see.
7. On 14 October 2017, the Leeds Diocesan Synod approved the change of name. This proposal from the Bishop of Leeds now goes forward – with the concurrence of the Dioceses Commission – to the General Synod for approval. [Should the General Synod also give its approval, the Bishop of Leeds would then be able to forward the attached Petition – ANNEX 2 - to Her Majesty in Council.]

(signed)

MICHAEL CLARKE

Chair

The Dioceses Commission

3 January 2018

**Extract from the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007**

“11. Change of name of see

(1) Without prejudice to any other powers of Her Majesty in Council in relation to sees, Her Majesty in Council, on receipt of a petition from the bishop of the diocese concerned under this section, shall have power to change the name of any diocesan or suffragan see.

(2) Before submitting a petition under subsection (1) above, the bishop shall first consult the Commission and obtain the approval of the diocesan synod of the diocese concerned and shall then, if he decides to proceed with the petition, lay the petition, together with a report thereon from the Commission, before the General Synod for its approval.

(3) Where the Business Committee of the General Synod determines that any such petition does not need to be debated by the Synod, then, unless notice is given by a member of the Synod in accordance with its Standing Orders that that member wishes the petition to be debated, the petition shall for the purposes of subsection (2) above be deemed to have been approved by the Synod.

(4) Where the petition is approved by the General Synod the bishop of the diocese may forward it to Her Majesty in Council.”

**THE HUMBLE PETITION TO HER MAJESTY IN COUNCIL OF  
THE RIGHT REVEREND NICHOLAS BAINES  
LORD BISHOP OF LEEDS UNDER SECTION 11 OF  
THE DIOCESES, PASTORAL AND MISSION MEASURE 2007**

**MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY  
WHEREAS**

1. The town of Richmond was appointed the see of a suffragan bishop by an Order in Council dated 6 April 1889 (having been attached to the former diocese of Ripon)
2. The suffragan see of Richmond has subsequently become a suffragan see of the diocese of Leeds
3. It is thought desirable to change the name of the suffragan see of Richmond to Kirkstall
4. The Dioceses Commission has been consulted as to the proposed change of name and the approval of the diocesan synod of the diocese of Leeds has been obtained
5. This petition, together with a report thereon from the Dioceses Commission, has been laid before and approved by the General Synod

**NOW THEREFORE WE, NICHOLAS, BY DIVINE PERMISSION LORD BISHOP OF LEEDS**, do humbly petition Your Majesty in Council in exercise of the power contained in section 11(1) of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 to change the name of the suffragan see of Richmond to Kirkstall

**GIVEN** under our hand and episcopal seal  
this                    day of                    2018