

Annex J

Copies of the further comments received from  
representors regarding the draft Scheme

9

# Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Green, Gosport

Secretary  
Parochial Church Council



**Mr. James Davidson-Brett  
The Church of England  
Church Commissioners  
Church House  
Great Smith Street,  
London,  
SW1P 3AZ**

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>. July, 2019

Dear James,

**Mission & Pastoral Measure 2011 Diocese of Portsmouth  
Benefices of St. John, Forton; Christ Church, Gosport; and Holy Trinity,  
Gosport**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to make further comments, in the light of the Bishops reply of 20<sup>th</sup>. June.

Firstly, I have to say that am surprised and rather disappointed that the official response from Christ Church and Holy Trinity Gosport made to Portsmouth Diocese was not included with the other responses. In a letter to me as the PCC Secretary dated 15<sup>th</sup>. April from Rex Andrew to it states; *The draft scheme is sent to you as a PCC Secretary and you should ensure that the PCC as a body is able to make any comments on the draft if it wishes.*

Following the various meetings, the PCC's of Christ Church and Holy Trinity made their response to the formal consultation (*copy attached to this letter*) and I submitted this in good time to Portsmouth Diocese. I was assured by them that this document would eventually be forwarded to the Church Commissioners along with any other submissions that they had received received,

Many individuals on my PCC now feel that their views have not been taken into account. I would like to know why Portsmouth Diocese withheld this information from the Church Commissioners

**8. "Please comment on Holy Trinity, Gosport PCC's view...(or to designate him as team vicar)?"**

We agree it is regrettable that the letter of the 12<sup>th</sup> April was overlooked so that we did not appear to understand the position and for this we apologise. However, it is also regrettable that we were not fully aware until that time (almost 6 months from the start of the consultation period) why it was considered that "...an open and transparent recruitment process was beneficial..."

this leads us on to

**10. "What is your response to the view that loss of trust following the consultation process and not designating Mr Davis as team rector..."**

The loss of trust has its roots in a situation involving the actions of a non-stipendiary priest and his wife which arose over 4 years ago and which has never been fully resolved. In our view the Bishop completely failed in his duty of pastoral care and safeguarding duties towards Revd Andy Davis and his wife.

I attach a copy of my letter to the Bishop dated the 24th May 2015 which I believe is self-explanatory. The Bishop refused to speak to us. It was only with Archdeacon Gavin Collins' care and involvement that partial resolution of the situation was reached i.e. the 2 people involved have been banned from entering both Holy Trinity and Christ Church. However, there were limits to how much he could achieve. It is our view that the actions of this priest warranted suspension although Andy, being the person he is, would have accepted an unequivocal apology from the priest concerned given in a joint meeting with the Bishop - such a meeting was never forthcoming. Rightly or wrongly (we would hope wrongly!) those members of our congregation who are aware of the situation now feel that the "open and transparent recruitment process" could be used to move Andy on, either by his finding the process untenable and deciding to go elsewhere, or by his application not being shortlisted for interview because he does not have "the relevant gifts"! We believe that will be a great loss to both the Gosport Deanery and Portsmouth Diocese.

Yours sincerely

*Chrissie O'Neill*

Chrissie O'Neill  
Secretary  
Holy Trinity Church  
Parochial Church Council

## **Portsmouth Diocese's "Resourcing Growth"** **-a Response from Christ Church, Gosport and Holy Trinity, Gosport**

At our last meeting about the proposed deanery reorganisation, it was revealed that:

- 1) Elson would like to go with Bridgemaury and merge with Rowner.
- 2) Forton (who wish to be a Mission Hub) would be open to joining with us, rather than Alverstoke.

This seems to us workable, and we suggest a positive vision for the future, which we have sketched out thus:

1) Christ Church, Holy Trinity and Forton join together as co-equal partners in a single parish with three equally cherished church buildings. There is one PCC for the whole parish but continues to be two churchwardens (and a treasurer) for each church.

2) We should apply for grants from the Church Commissioners to allow significant investment in the fabric of all three buildings:

a) **for Christ Church:** to provide a new floor; easily moveable (and beautiful looking) pews; and a modern, well equipped "kitchen area" (in the corner where we currently serve coffee). All these would make it possible to do a lot more in the building during the week, but also maintain our current 8.00am and 9.30am/10.00am Sunday Services, and continue to be a centre for quality "middle-of-the-road" worship.

b) **for Holy Trinity:** a refurbished kitchen, Capper Room, Goldring Room, a more flexible vestry area, and new, integrated audio-visual equipment. We continue our Anglo-Catholic worship and excellent music and arts programme, and make use of the skills brought by the two new posts outlined in 3) below.

c) **For Forton:** whatever the people of Forton Church decide that they need in order to become an effective, attractive (and busy) community building, also offering innovative and contemporary forms of worship.

3) We apply for funding for two new posts, to work alongside the Vicar:

a) a full time administrative/operations manager to encourage and facilitate new community/social enterprise-type uses for all three buildings.

b) a Pioneer Minister with proven skills in working with children and youth, who would (for example) work closely (through the newly refurbished Christ Church) with Newtown and Haselworth Schools, as well as developing children and youth ministry through Forton Church.

**Although we are determined to be open and positive, please see the attached appendix, which expresses the bewilderment, anger and frustration of our people with this whole process.**

## Appendix

- 1) No-one could possibly be against the aims of this programme. We all want to see people of all ages coming to faith (and deepening that faith) and to see the church continuing to engage with local communities and those in need.
- 2) But surely the starting point for a Christian discussion must be openness and honesty? The material on the diocesan website and presented both in the *Portsmouth News*, and at the meeting for the Gosport Deanery on 18<sup>th</sup> October paints a very rosy picture and is saturated in "P.R. speak". There has been next to no acknowledgement of the issues that our congregations are most concerned about.
- 3) Here are those issues:
  - (a) their present priests being handed redundancy notices, with no guarantee of a post in the future;
  - (b) merging with other parishes and what that might mean;
  - (c) their church building ceasing to be a parish church and becoming a "Mission Hub" (and what that might mean in practice for the life of the church in this place);
  - (d) whether the abrupt removal of priests' freeholds is to make clergy more malleable towards the introduction of worship and ministry from an evangelical tradition.
  - (e) one-third of the proposed £9 million budget coming from "reallocation of existing resources";
  - (f) what happens with ministry to the elderly, when the main focus is on the young?
  - (g) What is the future of worship from a central/Catholic tradition, including eucharistic worship?
  - (h) Alverstoke and Lee-on-the-Solent being excluded from the process of reorganisation.
- 4) These are all scarcely referred to in the official publicity, or simply not referred to at all. One or two were mentioned in passing (and in a decidedly "matter-of-fact" manner) at the meeting – and this was only because the speakers were cornered by questions at the end and therefore had no option but to respond.
- 5) This approach is – frankly - deceitful and dishonest; and it means that our people will now find it very difficult to trust the diocese throughout the rest of the process. If they can gloss over such fundamental issues at the very beginning, what else will be hidden or glossed over as the process unfolds? Many already think (and we hope they are wrong) that the process is not a proper consultation, but that the way forward has already been decided.

- 6) Some points about our priest, Fr Andy, being given six months' notice in June 2019, and being "welcome to apply" for one or more of the new posts that are coming into being:
- (a) Does the diocese understand the shock and outrage felt by our people, when a much loved and hard-working priest is treated in this way? (Ironically, he will be given his notice just twelve days before commemorating thirty years of loyal service to this diocese).
  - (b) Will the work that Fr Andy has done (in providing stability for our two churches and in building them up in faith and love) risk being undone, because his ministry is being brought to an abrupt and untimely end?
  - (c) How can any plans be made beyond 2019 (including preparations for these new initiatives) if there could be a completely new team of ministers in place in early 2020?
  - (d) If Fr Andy was remaining in post, he could be planning right now how best to implement change and welcome new pioneer ministers to complement the work already being done.
  - (e) How will parish representatives cope with the potentially bizarre experience of interviewing Fr Andy alongside other candidates when he is still officially in post; and how will they be able to be truly objective in whatever decisions will have to be made about him and other candidates?
- 7) As well as having many questions ourselves, we feel deeply for the people of Forton and Elson, with whom – it was proposed – we merge. Mother Carrie has already questioned whether Forton should join with Alverstoke, as they already share a Pioneer Minister, the Revd Tim Watson. The people of Elson are currently without their priest, and having spent five years working hard to make the plurality with Bridgemary work, are now facing its dissolution. Bridgemary face a merger with Rowner, which – last time it was tried – did not work. We feel for Fr John Draper and his people, too – and are aware of their very deep concerns.
- 8) There are already many faithful people in the congregations that these changes will affect, who need to be properly looked after, and properly listened to. Many have supported their parish church (and the diocese and the wider church) for many years. They work tirelessly both for their parishes and within their local communities. The people of our deanery contributed £331,275.07 to Parish Share last year; and even if you remove the contributions of Alverstoke and Lee (whom we were told at the meeting did not face reorganisation because they attract "good numbers" and make a "significant contribution" to Parish Share) the parishes being targeted by this strategy still gave £102,197.19 (plus a whole lot more to the work of the local church and the communities they serve, through sacrificial generosity with money, time and talents).
- 9) Much of what is proposed has huge legal implications. Presumably the diocese receives professional advice about all this. Where do we go for legal advice concerning our parishes

(including their administration and finances) and the proposed redundancy package for our priest?

- 10) Parish Ministry is an iceberg – the vast bulk of the work done through them is hidden from view and will not show up within any "data-crunching" that the diocese may choose to do. Drastic changes to parish ministry in Gosport risk "throwing the baby out with the bathwater" – and once existing structures and priestly parish ministries have gone, they will be very difficult to rebuild. Has the diocese done what, for example, local government have to do, and carried out a detailed Risk Assessment to explore what happens if things do not go according to plan?
- 11) If the strategy does not create very significant new growth and a very substantial increase in income, how will things that have been set up be sustained and financed, once the five years of investment is at an end – and particularly if those who give so sacrificially at present have been lost to the church, or further alienated? Whatever ministry has begun will require substantial additional funding, in particular for fabric maintenance and development.
- 12) The rosy vision that the diocese presents – as well as glossing over the fundamental issues listed in 3) above, has a questionable reliance on "the numbers game", or what is often referred to as "bums on seats".
- 13) For example, the three deaneries involved are being targeted because they have the lowest church attendance per head of the population – less than 1%. Some questions and comments about this:
  - (a) If the strategy brought – let us say – a four-fold increase in attendance, and the numbers matter so much, why would 96% of the population not being in church be any less of a "failure" than 99% (apart from in purely percentage point terms)?
  - (b) What has happened to the long-standing principle of measuring church attendance in a parish church as the ratio of attenders to parish population? On this measure, Christ Church and Holy Trinity do as "well", if not "better" than Alverstoke and Lee-on-the-Solent.
  - (c) Is the diocese aware that there are about twenty other churches and Christian communities across Gosport (all but one is a member of "Churches Together in Gosport") with combined attendances of over 2,500? ....and that many of these already offer "modern and accessible worship" and already target young people and families in particular? Interestingly, many of them are facing declining numbers too.
- 14) The words in inverted commas in 12) above are there deliberately to point to the fact that playing "the numbers game" is fraught with difficulties. Have we forgotten many of the fundamentals of theology and ecclesiology, and of Anglican worship and witness in particular? For example:
  - (a) offering worship from a central/Catholic tradition with depth, vibrancy and engagement.



- (b) offering something that is radically different from the world around us;
- (c) the fact that worship with depth to it is not always immediately "accessible";
- (d) the Christian Community as the herald of the Kingdom, not an attractive "club" to join;
- (e) numbers in church being of much less importance than faithful witness;
- (f) that we will always be a tiny minority in society, because *"If the radical challenge of the gospel was preached effectively, our churches would be empty."* (Michael Ramsey)
- (g) seeking first the Kingdom of God;
- (h) the understanding of the church as the "faithful remnant";
- (i) walking the way of the cross;
- (j) the principle that there will always be net "givers" and net "receivers" in the Parish Share system, and that this is fundamental to how it works. Indeed, it could and should be seen as the main reason for the existence of Parish Share. *[When Fr Andy was in Bishop's Waltham and Upham, one of the principles that inspired the people there to meet a £25,000.00 increase in Parish Share in just four years, was that they took pride that their giving allowed a full-time priest in places like Warren Park, a parish that was, at that time, paying less than £4,000.00 in Parish Share.]*

15) Also, playing the "numbers game" can lead you to miss the underlying realities. Two examples:

- (a) As mentioned in 8) above, we were told at the 18<sup>th</sup> October meeting that Alverstoke and Lee did not face reorganisation because they attract "good numbers" and make a "significant contribution" to Parish Share (see also, point 13b above.) But the Revd Andrew Norris said that below the surface, things were not so rosy, and that he wanted his parishes to be part of the process, because otherwise they may face huge issues in ten years' time. Also, the Revd Dr Paul Chamberlain pointed out soon after he arrived in Lee, that beneath the apparently "healthy" attendance figures, the number of people in his congregation who were not retired was in single figures, and he saw this as pointing to the possibility that the church could die. If even their own ministers think that there are serious issues with the "successful" parishes of Alverstoke and Lee, shouldn't they be involved in these plans? Aren't we "all in this together"?
- (b) The work of our present Pioneer Minister, the Revd Tim Watson, is presented as one of three "shining examples" of pioneer ministry on the diocesan website. His Sunday worship at St Faith's, Tribe Road attracts 20 to 25 people. Does the diocese know what happened to the 30 to 40 people who worshipped on a Sunday morning at St Faith's before that service was closed down, or how they are now?

16) Has any thought been given to how different the church in Gosport will be with few parish priests and more pioneer ministers (all or some of whom may not be priests)? To give one example, the effects on the taking (and frequency) of eucharists, weddings, baptisms, funerals, ministry to the ill and dying, ministry in Gosport War Memorial Hospital and our many local nursing homes? To many of our people, the following is of fundamental importance: having a priest who teaches them, gives them Communion, is there when they are dying, and looks after their loved ones at the funeral and beyond. A living sign of God's care and faithfulness.

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## Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Green, Gosport

Secretary  
Parochial Church Council

**The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Portsmouth**  
**Bishopsgrove**  
**26 Osborn Road**  
**Fareham**  
**Hampshire,**  
**PO16 7DQ**

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>. May, 2015

Dear Bishop Christopher,

### **Resignation of Fr. Andy Davis as Area Dean of Gosport**

Following the announcement by Fr. Andy Davis that he has resigned as Area Dean of Gosport, an Emergency Meeting took place today of the Holy Trinity Parochial Church Council. Fr. Andy Davis and other members of the Clergy who normally attend our PCC meetings were not invited to attend.

A brief, but concise statement of the facts known by the Churchwardens and other officers of Holy Trinity Church leading to the decision of Fr. Andy's resignation, was read to those present.

During the discussion that followed, concern was expressed by many, that having taken the trouble to draw to the attention of The Venerable Gavin Collins, Archdeacon of The Meon, the deep concerns shared by many at Holy Trinity regarding the appalling behaviour of Fr. Brian Williams and his wife, Becky that these and other professional opinions have been ignored and discounted.

Deep concern was also expressed, regarding the apparent lack of duty and care by you for a respected member of your Clergy and our Vicar.

With respect, many felt that you should as a matter of some urgency, arrange to meet with the Holy Trinity Parochial Church to explain your actions / inactions in the matters raised by members of this Parish.

The meeting unanimously resolved, that;

Holy Trinity Parochial Church Council wish Bishop Christopher to come to Holy Trinity Church as a matter of urgency, to explain his actions or inactions in the matters raised by members of this Parish.

"The Holy Trinity Parochial Church Council would like you yourself to come; not a representative"

I look forward to hearing from you, so that I may be able to communicate your response to Holy Trinity Church Parochial Church Council.

Yours sincerely

Chrissie O'Neill  
Secretary  
Holy Trinity Church  
Parochial Church Council

*Copy: The Venerable Gavin Collins, Archdeacon of The Meon*

## **James Davidson-Brett**

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**From:** Lesley  
**Sent:** 05 July 2019 18:49  
**To:** James Davidson-Brett  
**Subject:** Gosport Christ Church and Forton Scheme

As a representative against the draft scheme I would like to make further comment.

My remarks are made in the light of the Archdeacon's statement that he wishes Christ Church and Holy Trinity to continue to provide a more traditional ministry.

Since this is the case and we hold classically English services with communion, why does the Archdeacon and his neighbour the Bishop want rid of Fr Andy Davis? The person who has made such a qualified success of these churches and who is so well liked and respected?

I am a regular churchgoer but have never met the Archdeacon. He has never, to my knowledge, introduced himself to church members. He has never explained his vision to us, except to support a scheme which rids us of our priest.

Mrs Lesley Tinman

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10



**James Davidson-Brett  
Pastoral  
Church Commissioners  
Church House  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3AZ**

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>. July, 2019

Dear Mr. James Davidson-Brett

**Mission & Pastoral Measure 2011 Diocese of Portsmouth  
Benefices of St. John, Forton; Christ Church, Gosport; and Holy Trinity, Gosport**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make further comments in the light of the Bishops response. Regretfully with such a short time to respond (*one week*) and time being of the essence it is simply not possible to respond to all of the points that have been made. I would however wish to make some observations, which I hope you will find useful.

**4. Was there any consultation beyond that with the statutory parties? In particular was there consultation with the incumbents and PCCs of St Faith, Lee-on-the-Solent and St Mary, Alverstoke? Why have those benefices not been included in this reorganisation? Did these proposals arise from a Deanery plan? St Mary, Alverstoke asked to be included in the informal consultation**

I feel that the Bishop has completely missed the point with St Mary, Alverstoke and St Faith, Lee-on-the-Solent being excluded. These are two of the largest parishes in the Gosport Deanery I would have thought it was essential that both of these parishes should have been included fully in the consultation process and the decision making, (*I was initially given to understand that as a Deanery we were all supposed to be in this project together*) most especially St Mary, Alverstoke who asked to be included, and the Bishop has chosen not to enlighten us as to the reason they wished to be included. How on earth can the Deanery of Gosport work together in the future if the Diocese has chosen not to include us all.

The reason given by the Bishop that both of these parishes are in a very different socio-economic demographic to that of Forton and Gosport, is quite frankly a breathtakingly snobbish reply and one that I would have thought better of coming from a Lord Bishop of Portsmouth in his reply. He should be reminded that socio-economic demographic is more than how wealthy the residents of any particular parish are. It is a sad situation when one is judged by how much money they have and how far up the social ladder they are. This to me just further demonstrates how out of the touch the Bishop is with his flock.

Socioeconomic characteristics of a population expressed statistically, should include a range of factors including age, sex, education level, income level, marital status, occupation, religion, birth rate, death rate, average size of a family, average age at marriage. I doubt very much if Portsmouth Diocese have considered all of these factors and that Alverstoke and Lee-on-the-Solent come out with high marks in all of these areas.

**5. Was there any consultation with these parishes or the deanery about how the Church Commissioners Strategic Funding should be used? To what extent are these reorganisation proposals linked to that funding? Is that funding aimed particularly at parishes with static or declining congregations and, if so, do these three parishes fall into that category? Please also comment on their financial viability.**

Unfortunately the Bishop misses my point regarding payments of the parish share, I did not use the words that payments were NOT SUSTAINABLE. I drew attention to the fact that in addition to the considerable amount of money that our parish has to find in carrying out routine maintenance and refurbishments to a listed building it was not helpful that parish share increases for Holy Trinity Church have risen in five years from £11,125 to £18,560, some 66% in total, the highest percentage increase in the diocese and that the Diocese had never responded to any of the concerns that I or the Church Wardens had attempted to raise with them. For the record, both Holy Trinity and Christ Church are fully up to date with all parish share payments.

When attending the initial meetings we were informed that the large influx of money from the Church of England would benefit us all, that we would all have some of this windfall to help bring our facilities up to date and take the burden off of us trying to raise funds for this, now we are told that the only place likely to get funding will be St John's Hub.

The problem is, at no time were minutes or notes taken of these meetings therefore it is a matter of opinion what was said. To the best of my knowledge the Bishop did not attend these meetings and could only base his comments in his response on briefings by a variety of different staff who attended the various meetings.


**11. Please comment on the views expressed by Mr O'Neill and Ms Peacock that St John's Forton is not suitable to be a "mission hub" or not needed as such. Is this, as suggested, a cornerstone of these proposals? If so, why is it being dealt with separately rather than as part of this draft Scheme? Or is it linked to the use of the Commissioners funding rather than to this proposed reorganisation?**

The Bishop's response that St. John's church building sits in a prominent position on the main A32, and is only a very short distance from St. Vincent's Sixth Form College, and also large areas of housing where significant numbers of young adults have been identified as still living in their parents' homes is in direct contrast with the views expressed at the last meeting that I attended. Many have reservations about the location, suitability and cost of converting this to a sustainable building that could be used as a hub. In point of fact, at the meeting the Archdeacon confirmed that Portsmouth Diocese had yet to seek any professional advice regarding the suitability of converting St John's Church, Forton into a Mission Hub, and it should be further investigated and other options looked at.

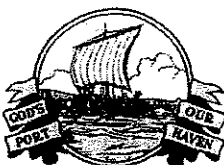
I don't feel that the Bishop has provided sufficient reasons why this should be the choice of the building or location of the hub. I personally remain of the opinion, that the proposal to turn St John's Church, Forton into a Mission Hub requires some very serious and professional consideration, it is a large building, very cold in winter, and not in a good state of repair. It would, therefore, need vast sums of money spent on it to make it an attractive place for the community to come to and be made flexible enough to be suitable for a variety of activities. I feel that for the Church of England to invest money in converting this building would be a bad investment.

I hope that these points will prove useful for the Commissioners in forming a view on the proposed Pastoral Scheme which will have a great impact on the future of our benefices and the Gosport Deanery.

Yours sincerely



Geoffrey J.D. O'Neill  
Past Mayor of Gosport



Freeman of the Borough of Gosport



Freeman of the City of London



**Mr. Rex Andrew  
Pastoral  
Church Commissioners  
Church House  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3AZ**

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>. July, 2019

Dear Mr. Andrew,

**Mission & Pastoral Measure 2011 Diocese of Portsmouth  
Benefices of St. John, Forton; Christ Church, Gosport; and Holy Trinity, Gosport**

Further to my letter dated Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>. July. Although this comes separate to my earlier reply, it is a matter that I hope the Church Commissioners may wish to consider.

I fully agree that the Commissioners are likely to be helped significantly in forming a view on the proposed Pastoral Scheme affecting the benefices of St John, Forton; Christ Church, Gosport; and Holy Trinity, Gosport by hearing directly from the representors and diocesan representatives. Although this is not likely to prove very difficult for the diocesan representatives, many of the other responders that I know would not find it easy to travel to Church House in London on 17 July 2019 to attend and participate in the hearing, due to age, health and other commitments (*especially at such short notice*)

As has been pointed out on several occasions, there are many faithful people in our Deanery that these changes will have a major impact on and who need to be properly looked after, and listened to. Many have supported their parish church (*and the diocese and the wider church*) for a great many years, some from birth who are now in their 70/80's who work tirelessly both for their parishes and within their local communities. The decision that the Church Commissioners finally come to in considering this proposed Pastoral Scheme will obviously have an enormous impact on the future of our benefices and the Gosport Deanery. If Portsmouth Diocese and the Church Commissioners make the wrong decision, all of the hard work that has taken place over many years would be lost forever.

Prior to my retirement, I worked as a Director for Hampshire County Council and part of my role included advising community associations, voluntary and non-profit making organisations and local charities in making applications to the National Lottery and other major grant funding providers for funding to support schemes in their community. Should a scheme be considered worthy of pursuing, it was often the case that the grant funding organisation would welcome the opportunity to make a site visit to the applicant to learn about the organisation, if and how the project would benefit the community and would be likely to succeed. I always found this very productive and most helpful.

May I, with respect to the Church Commissioners, suggest that with the potential large amount of grant funding that this Pastoral Scheme is likely to involve and the very high risk factor involved, and taking into consideration the concerns of so many, that the Church Commissioners accept an invitation to visit the Gosport Deanery, look for themselves at the Churches / Buildings and have the opportunity to talk to the Church Wardens, Officers, Clergy and other community leaders. This is a most important matter, which I hope the Church Commissioners will consider. If so, I would be only too pleased to assist in arranging such a visit.

Yours sincerely



Geoffrey J.D. O'Neill  
Past Mayor of Gosport

Copy Mr. James Davidson-Brett



Freeman of the Borough of Gosport



Freeman of the City of London



Mr J Davidson- Brett  
Pastoral  
Church Commissioners  
Church House  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW 1P 3 AZ

3 Jul 2009

### **Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011**

Christ Church, Gosport, response to Bishop Christopher's letter dated 20 June 2019.

In answer to some of the Bishop's observations we believe should and hope can be considered at the hearing on 17 July 2019.

1. Total Sunday attendance contribution £55k our cost is alleged to be £110k, this includes St John, Forton supported by one priest whereas the parishes of Holy Trinity and Christ Church are supported by only one priest also and pay the majority of the total. We understand and support the Parish Share philosophy, but it could be considered unfair to judge the viability of the two main parishes in Gosport against the one struggling to pay their way and has requested to become a chapel of ease.
2. We do have a shared aim to increase our congregation but are unable to accept a solution that does not consider the pastoral requirements of Gosport and appears to be based on statistics gathered on Sundays.

Most activities take place during the week, for example there are 400 children in church this week (and happens every term for six days enjoying "Prayer Spaces" This is in addition to seasonal services and other activities.

Two major funerals of some gravity introduced 700 young people to Holy Trinity and Steam Punk weddings also take place!

None of these activities are recorded statistics but are valuable to the community.

3. The Bishop is somewhat disingenuous when he says we are not fully aware of the formal consultation process, we believe we were but received so many

mixed messages at the time, especially relating to the selection processes which at one time were explained that we would be involved in the clergy selection process and now appears purely a Bishop (patron) decision.

4. Further consideration could have been considered, that there remains an outstanding "Safeguard issue, of which the Bishop is aware involving a non-stipendiary and his wife, whose behaviour was so appalling, the archdeacon has banned them from coming to our churches, but they are still very much in evidence locally and in the deanery. The Bishop is aware, but it presently remains outside the Diocesan Safeguarding organisation. This has not been satisfactorily addressed which has rightly or wrongly prevented our parishes from partaking in the complete consultation process. We understand that can only be considered as mitigation but nonetheless remains a serious outstanding matter.
5. Our congregations are increasing due to unrecorded migration and that a significant number of the congregation are from outside the Parish. We doubt this is unusual and is not undesirable but should perhaps be considered a warning. Local churches are changing their worship from Anglicanism or reformed Catholicism to a less sacramental and nonconformist approach that is largely unsatisfactory to many and does not sustain the spiritual need of the people. The evidence in Gosport suggests the planted evangelical churches that have enjoyed large and enthusiastic congregations are in decline.

Adrian Groves (Churchwarden, Christ Church)

Co- respondent to HT and CC submission dated 17 May 2019

Copy to Rex Andrew



## **James Davidson-Brett**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** 04 July 2019 14:17  
**To:** James Davidson-Brett; Revd Andy Davis; Baker Eric  
**Cc:** Chrissie O'Neill; Joan  
**Subject:** Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011  
**Attachments:** Response to Bishop Parish reorganisatio.docx

Dear James,

Please find some further comments on the response by the Bishop of Portsmouth to our Deanery responses to the consultation.

We feel that as is often the case the complete story fails to be told and that under the surface much further discussion should take place. If one was a Jury a visit to the Parishes would certainly be of help especially sighting the geographical disadvantages of the schemes recommendations. In fact a better solution in my view could be evolved.

The points we have included are not, perhaps considered relevant but it is those irrelevances' that are often most important.

We hope that our further deliverances can be considered by the inquiry and between us we will get a satisfactory outcome for Gosport.

Adrian

Sent from Windows Mail