



The Federation of Riders Schools

Riders Infant and Junior Schools

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Executive Headteacher: Ms Lisa Dunning

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6th November 2018

To whom it may concern,

Father Jonathan is a pivotal member of our school community.

Throughout the school year, Father Jonathan interacts with all of the children in the junior school through fortnightly assemblies. Within these assemblies, the children learn about the Christian faith and the wider world. Father Jonathan engages them in discussion and raises deep questions through teaching, challenges and games. The children love his assemblies and they are always well-thought out, resourced and pitched perfectly to engage and entertain but also to teach. This is especially evident at Harvest, Christmas and Easter, when Father Jonathan leads the children and staff in our celebrations and reflections.

"I love it when Father Jonathan comes in. Once he made a massive flower out of newspaper and we learnt all about growing." Year 4 child.

"He teaches us about things we wouldn't know about if he didn't come. The world & God & other people." Year 3 child.

"He blew up a world beach ball-thing and he showed us about how small the world could be but how big it could be too. He makes me think. You know about things more than school." Year 5 child.

We have welcomed the Prayer Space into our school on 3 occasions. Questionnaires following have shown that the children and staff in our Years 5 & 6 (6 classes) have appreciated the opportunity to contemplate life and their thoughts and beliefs in a supportive environment. The children are allowed and supported to explore complex issues such as forgiveness, gratitude and solace. Father Jonathan has taken our Music Room and transformed it on each occasion to provide a serene environment, totally unlike the children's everyday school experience. Father Jonathan has taken responsibility for all communications with parents (through letters) and the children (through assemblies) and we have been left with a small display or object made by the children to remind them of their experience. These are displayed in my office and children will comment upon them frequently and positively.

"I really liked it. It made me stop and think. There was one activity where you put a tablet and it dissolved. You had to stand and watch it bubble and think about things that you would like to say sorry for. When the bubbles go, so does your bad feeling." Year 6 child.

"There was a space just to sit. I didn't like the room to start with because I thought you had to do the things that were there. Father Jonathan told me about the place to sit and just listen and think. When I was ready, I did the other bits and it was good." (Year 6 child)

When we have sought to make changes in the way we present and share with parents, Father Jonathan is flexible and supportive. He has supported a wide range of initiatives from playground carolling to orchestrating a 3rd Age tea that our Year 6 (3 classes) children could host. We are able to use Father Jonathan as a link to our wider community and provide our children with worthwhile experiences as a result.

Federation Website: www.ridersschools.co.uk

Federation Blogs: www.ridersblogs.co.uk

The children all visit the Church and have also been part of the displays there. They are aware that they have joined with children across Leigh Park to create what have been beautiful and symbolic displays, which in turn create a sense of wider community and shared beliefs.

Throughout the year, we hold performances, fairs and workshops for parents. Father Jonathan attends the vast majority of these. He is present when our Year 6 perform at both the production and the Leavers' Assembly, he leads our Christmas performances (12 classes) and he is present when we celebrate attendance. He also comes to all school fairs. In times of crisis, Father Jonathan is on hand to provide support; spiritual or practical.

When our children join Year 3, they already know Father Jonathan from the stories he has read and the assemblies he has held in the infant school. When children join us from other Leigh Park schools (& there is significant movement between schools), again, he is a familiar and reassuring face. Our children and their parents can hold negative views of those in authority and be nervous of adults outside of their immediate family. Father Jonathan bridges this gap. He takes the time to get to know our children, our parents and our staff. When I joined the school and was new to the Leigh Park community, I was invited to the Church so that I was able to understand better the needs of the families that I was working with. This level of personal commitment is what makes Father Jonathan such an important member of our school and the wider community.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Ms Claire Linfield

Head of School – Juniors.

Mrs Jan Horn
The Secretary
St Clare's PCC
St Clare's Church
Warren Park
PO9 4JX

25th May 2019

Rex Andrew
The Secretary – Pastoral division
The Church Commissioners
Church House
Great Smith Street
LONDON
SW1P 3AZ

Dear Mr Andrew

Mission and Pastoral Measure
Proposed Pastoral Re-organisation - Diocese of Portsmouth
St Clare's, Warren Park, St Francis, Leigh Park & St Alban's, West Leigh

I have been asked to write to you in response to the plans of the Diocese of Portsmouth for pastoral re-organisation including our parishes. I am the PCC Secretary at St Clare's Church, Warren Park and I am making this formal response on behalf of St Clare's Church PCC before the deadline of 29th May 2019.

We have been meeting, talking and praying with St Francis Church PCC with whom we already work very closely and we have also met St Alban's and the people from the diocese and from Bishop's Council.

The PCC of St Clare's Church, Warren Park opposes the current proposal.

We at St Clare's PCC are fully aware of the full response being made by the PCC of St Francis Church, Leigh Park and endorse both their opposition to the current proposal and also the counter-proposal.

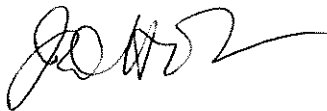
I attach accompanying papers from St Clare's Church PCC which I originally sent to the Secretary of Portsmouth DMPC (Jenny Hollingsworth) for consideration by the Bishop's Council on 3rd April 2019. These please should be read alongside the wider submission from the PCC of St Francis. The Views of St Clare's PCC have not changed from those expressed in the formal letter of 27th March 2019.

Finally, it feels unjust to say that the Church here has "failed" when the Diocese clearly knows nothing of what happens on the ground in Warren Park and Leigh Park. No-one from the Diocese has ever visited to see ministry in action. Only the Bishop has attended worship here. The promised "continuing consultation and fact-finding simply has not materialised and the Diocese has no idea what shape future ministry here should take.

This research, this consultation, this engagement and an agreed Way Forward seems essential to build for our futures. Again without it we fear that any scheme of the Diocese will take too long to get going and waste most of the money allocated as needs, ministries, projects and good will are established.

It is unfair to criticise the ministry of Karina Green and Jonathan Jeffery when for many years we have been asking for Funding, Staffing and Support. Of course new funding, staffing and support should produce results but the real test would be for Jonathan and Karina to be entrusted with those additional resources, thus enabling their Visionary Leadership and Mission to flourish.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Jeffery', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mrs Jan Horn

PCC Secretary
St Clare's Church, Warren Park

Mrs Jan Horn
The Secretary
St Clare's PCC
St Clare's Church
Warren Park

27th March 2019

Ms Jenny Hollingsworth
The Secretary
Portsmouth Diocesan
Mission and Pastoral Committee
Peninsular House
Portsmouth

Dear Ms Hollingsworth

Proposed Pastoral Re-organisation St Clare's Church, Warren Park, St Francis Church,
Leigh Park & St Alban's Church, West Leigh

I have been asked to write to you I response to the plans of the diocese for pastoral re-organisation including our parishes. I am the PCC Secretary at St Clare's Church, Warren Park and I am making the formal response of St Clare's Church PCC before the deadline of 29th March.

We have been meeting, talking and praying with St Francis Church PCC with whom we already work very closely and we have also met St Alban's and the people from the diocese and from Bishop's Council.

The PCC of St Clare's Church, Warren Park opposes the current proposal.

The basis for our objection is two-fold. Firstly, the current proposal does not take proper account of the wide-reaching public consultation with our people. This gave a very clear and united approach. Secondly, the current proposal does not take account of our pre-existing Vision which is about Mission in our parishes.

(1) A proper response to the Voice of our Community:

We noted that the Diocese has undertaken a significant piece of community consultation. The Diocese launched the community consultation at a very well attended public meeting at St Wilfrid's Church, Cowplain and advertised it widely through positive endorsements from senior clergy in the local press.

It is unlikely that any of us will have the resources to create a better opportunity for garnering information about what the people of these estates think, or to hear the voice of this community, in the near future.

By any standards the response would be considered significant. For a community notoriously disengaged from formal authority structures and said by the Diocese to be uncommitted to the church, it might be considered extraordinary. People responded energetically to the consultation and engaged with the issue that they felt mattered to them. The weight of their responses contributed to Bishop's Council delaying its response by eight weeks.

We are aware of the general thrust of the feedback gathered during this process.

This seemed unanimously:-

(a) to support retaining posts for the existing clergy,

(b) to affirm their leadership and

(c) to endorse a model built around their existing outreach and ministry.

(2) Taking proper account of our pre-existing Vision for Mission:

The current proposal does not take account of our **pre-existing Vision** which is about **Mission** in our parishes. The agreed Vision for St Clare's Warren Park & St Francis, Leigh Park is a **dynamic vision**.

* It is **missional** in focus and provides a creative framework for strategic development.

* It is **authentic** to these places, to what we, in Leigh Park and Warren Park, believe about mission and ministry and to the Gospel.

* In the context of pastoral reorganisation, we must be true to our vision.

* We need to create the plan before we agree the legal scheme because to do otherwise will be to create a vision vacuum.

We therefore put forward an alternative for these parishes:-

1. That St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park become one parish
2. That the parish of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park create a formal group under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 with the parish of St Alban, West Leigh (governed by a joint council (under impending legislation)

3. That the post of incumbent of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park be designated to the exiting incumbent of those parishes
4. That the incumbency of St Albans parish remain
5. That the third post granted to the estates (proposed group) under the Havant Deanery Plan, and previously held by the PO9 Pioneers, be held by a Church Planting Minister with responsibility for three simultaneous church plants at venues across the group
(Example venues - H & W Football Club, West Leigh; The Hub, Leigh Park; St Clare's Church, Warren Park)
6. SDF bid to include funding for a Business Manager to be accountable to the incumbents and to the joint council and responsible for all matters of administrative compliance
7. SDF bid to also include funding for a community pioneer with responsibility for managing a CAP debt centre and developing the food poverty project drawing clients from across the group
8. Incumbents to work with the Business Manager on buildings projects in relation to community space and hall development at St Francis and St Clare and church building issues at St Albans
9. Significant social enterprise initiatives developed
10. Group to work as a co-sharing and cohesive collaborative whole serving its distinct communities and its vision and mission imperatives by the grace of God, the joy of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

A modern model for dynamic, community focused estates ministry. We believe that this plan, incorporating at points 1 – 5 a legal framework proposal, is strategically sound and missionally exciting.

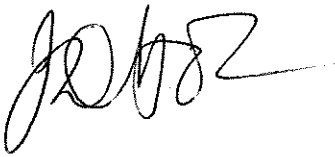
We are fully aware of the full response being made by the PCC of St Francis Church, Leigh Park and endorse both their opposition to the current proposal and also the counter-proposal.

I attach accompanying papers from St Clare's Church PCC and these please should be circulated amongst the members of Bishop's Council sitting as the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee and should be read alongside the wider submission from the PCC of St Francis.

As a PCC we feel that you should also hear our opposition to the nature of this process and the effect that it necessarily has on our Vicar, Fr Jonathan, his wife and

children and the far-reaching affect it has on their well-being, planning for the future, the children's schooling and the potential loss of their home. We urge Bishop's Council to take all of the above into consideration at this stage of the process and to find an imaginative alternative to meets the needs of growth, development and mission in Warren Park along with Leigh Park and West Leigh.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JHorn', written in a cursive style.

Mrs Jan Horn

PCC Secretary
St Clare's Church, Warren Park

OUR VISION

We will share
the Good News that people are
made by God, known by God
and loved by God –
transforming the way they think about themselves,
others, their community,
the world around them
and God.

1. SPIRITUALITY

We will provide holistic and seamless
opportunity
for reflection on the mysteries of the
world and our part in them
and so encourage spiritual maturity
and a developing understanding
of the fullness of life.

2. WORSHIP

We will create authentic worship
which is true to our aim and
communicates it
- peaceful, embracing, encouraging,
joyful, meaningful, making connections;
holding its integrity;
true to the people we serve and to God.
As God would have it be.

3. CREATIVE USE OF OUR SACRED SPACE

We will create space for
encounter
with each other and with God.

4. SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

We will stand in solidarity
with our neighbours as we face life's
challenges together.

5. COMMUNITY COHESION

We will work with, alongside
and for our neighbours and community
partners
to create a community of
nurture, learning and opportunity
where all can flourish and grow.

Heart of the Park
St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park

Our's is a dynamic vision.

- * It is missional in focus and provides a creative framework for strategic development.
- * It is authentic to these places, to what we, in Leigh Park and Warren Park, believe about mission and ministry and to the Gospel.
- * In the context of pastoral reorganisation, we must be true to our vision.

- * We must therefore find a way forward that creates the best opportunity for our vision to become reality.

- * We need to create the plan before we agree the legal scheme because to do otherwise will be to create a vision vacuum.

We have considered all of this; St Francis and St Clare PCCs have worked together with the leadership of one vicar for many years; we have met together and discussed the way forward; we have prayed about it; we have asked questions of the Diocese, of ourselves and of each other.

We have noted that the Diocese has undertaken a significant piece of community consultation. The Diocese launched the community consultation at a very well attended public meeting and advertised it widely through positive endorsements from senior clergy in the local press.

It is unlikely that any of us will have the resources to create a better opportunity for garnering information about what the people of these estates think, or to hear the voice of this community, in the near future.

By any standards the response would be considered significant. For a community notoriously disengaged from formal authority structures and said by the Diocese to be uncommitted to the church, it might be considered extraordinary. People responded energetically to the consultation and engaged with the issue that they felt mattered to them. The weight of their responses contributed to Bishop's Council delaying its response by eight weeks.

We are aware of the general thrust of the feedback gathered during this process.

This seemed unanimously to support retaining posts for the existing clergy, affirming their leadership and endorsing a model built around their existing outreach and ministry.

There has been some confusion regarding the formal proposal. The proposal is for a team ministry across the three parishes, led by a team rector assisted by a team vicar.

The nature of the team vicar post has not been specified in the formal proposal, but via the press and social media the Diocese has consistently described it as being a "church planting" team vicar role. When questions have been raised about this, it has been explained by a member of Bishop's Council that "church planting" team vicar is just one possibility – an example, if you like.

However, it has been explained by the Diocese as describing the "direction of travel" and preparing the parishes for the likely outcome.

* We think that, alongside our own vision for these estates – indeed, because of that vision – it is important to take account of the voice of these communities.

* **The existing proposal meets neither of these imperatives.**

We do not feel that the Diocese has fully heard or reflected on our understanding of these communities, our engagement, our ability to reach the hard to reach, our versatility, our creativity, our inclusivity, our prayerful impact or our wide and generous enthusiasm for embracing innovative forms of ministry.

We are currently shackled by a lack of resources and a lack of support which have exhausted and overstretched us;

but we are not shackled by brittleness or inflexibility or inward-focused self-preservation.

We feel that the formal proposal, together with the indicated direction of travel, reflects neither the breadth of our vision nor the depth of the public response to the informal consultation.

At first it sounds cutting edge and change driven, but on closer inspection it is static and bounded by a traditional authority structure and a culture which labels and defines when we should be embracing and co-working. We do not use our counter proposal simply to maintain the status quo. We are not afraid of change, but we think that what creates fabulousness is people and communities being encouraged to develop, evolve and innovate from a firm foundation. That is the language of our thinking.

We want to blend the flexibility brought by recognising our distinctiveness with the unifying nature of co-governance; we want to embrace and celebrate everything that is creative, generous and wise about our "now" offer, by recognising, developing and enhancing its deep networked impact across our communities and we want to blend that with alternative forms of ministry which bring new and dynamic energy; we want to offer sacred space that speaks of otherness and sacred space that speaks into the heart of today and tomorrow; we want to work collaboratively with others with whom we share common core values in an atmosphere of mutual respect and open dialogue.

We care about our buildings, but we care more about what they represent than what they are.

These estates are loved and known through the ministry of the church here; the church, and the Good News of Jesus, is loved and known in return. We know this soil.

We believe that what we and the people of St Alban's PCC bring is the firm foundation on which to build.

Like the wise man, we have dug deeply and laid that foundation on rock (Luke 6: 46-49) and we continue to do this as we seek to build up and out. We are longing for the opportunity to combine all that we are with all that the Diocese can offer here to create a visionary model for estates ministry in this place.

Our passion for the Gospel and for these estates demands nothing less.

In short, our love for God and for our communities together with the voice of those communities and our ambition for ministry here push at the boundaries of the current proposal.

We therefore put forward an alternative for these parishes:-

1. That St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park become one parish

2. That the parish of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park create a formal group under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 with the parish of St Alban, West Leigh governed by a joint council (under impending legislation)
3. That the post of incumbent of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park be designated to the exiting incumbent of those parishes
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5. That the third post granted to the estates (proposed group) under the Havant Deanery Plan, and previously held by the PO9 Pioneers, be held by a Church Planting Minister with responsibility for three simultaneous church plants at venues across the group
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9. Significant social enterprise initiatives developed
10. Group to work as a co-sharing and cohesive collaborative whole serving its distinct communities and its vision and mission imperatives by the grace of God, the joy of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

A modern model for dynamic, community focused estates ministry.

We believe that this plan, incorporating at points 1 – 5 a legal framework proposal, is strategically sound and missionally exciting.

- * It provides a well constructed framework for drawing people into "the adventure of discipleship"¹ and is complimentary to the House of Bishop's Statement on Church Planting (June 2018) and the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission².
 - * It is flexible, builds on firm foundations, uses the existing clergy who remain as valued and trusted leaders on these estates, gives an equal voice and standing to all three established churches, echoes the feedback gathered during public consultation, increases capacity and allows for dynamic development and innovation.
- It is rooted in community and authentic to our voice.
In this regard it is the embodiment of the recent General Synod motion:-

That this Synod, committed to the Church of England's vocation to be a Christian presence in every community, and noting the historic marginalisation of social housing estates in the policies of both church and nation:

- a) commend the vision of the Estates Evangelism Task Group to see a serving, loving and worshipping Christian community on every significant social housing estate in the country;*
- b) urge every diocese to build ministry and mission on estates into its mission strategies, clergy deployment plans and SDF funding bids; and*
- c) give thanks for the Christian leadership offered by people from estate communities and calls upon the Archbishops' Council, the Church Commissioners and the NCIs, through their work under the Renewal and Reform programme, to enable the voices of people from estates and other marginalised communities to be heard and heeded in the life of the Church of England.*

The plan we propose is true to our vision in Leigh Park and Warren Park and authentic to the community narrative which has been heard so loudly through the public consultation and which we know and understand through our experience and knowledge of these estates.

It creates a singular opportunity for new ministry initiatives in the context of a trusted leadership. which is imaginative, passionate and courageous in its aspiration for ministry here.

It utilises the best resources of these parishes in the now, and for the future, building on what is already fabulous and facilitating ever broader and deeper engagement.

We commend it to you.

F J

From: ~~alison.watson@diocese.org.uk~~
Sent: 27 May 2019 12:16
To: Rex Andrew
Subject: Proposed Pastoral Scheme Leigh Park; Warren Park; West Leigh
Attachments: SUBMISSION e-copy.docx

Dear Rex,

Re: Proposed Pastoral Scheme Leigh Park; Warren Park; West Leigh

Please find attached an electronic copy of the submission of St Francis PCC in relation to the Pastoral Reorganisation proposals detailed above.

The submission is accompanied by a schedule of supporting documentation, some of which is only available in hard copy. For this reason the submission and accompanying documents have also been posted and will arrive with you by 1pm on Wednesday 29th May (the next day delivery being hindered by the Bank Holiday). The submission attached below is the same as that sent, the only difference being that in the supporting documentation social media links are given where the material itself cannot be emailed. The supporting documentation also contains a petition which was submitted to the Diocese during a public consultation in the Autumn and which we are sending you by way of submission to the Church Commissioners. It is also available for viewing on iPetitions (see Appendix 9)

The submission is a lengthy document and despite the best efforts of those of us who have put it together and scrutinised it I am afraid there is one significant typo, which has only been noticed since the hard copy was posted. It occurs on page 9 at Section 2(ii)(a) Team Ministry where the line

"Although Leigh Park and West Leigh are already in the same benefice and work very closely together, the community of West Leigh is very distinct"

should read:-

"Although Leigh Park and WARREN PARK are already in the same benefice and work very closely together, the community of West Leigh is very distinct."

You will understand that this makes a significant difference to the meaning of the paragraph and it is important that we correct it. It has been altered in the copy attached, but please be careful to take it into account as and when you work from the hard copy. Thank you.

Please also note that both the St Francis and St Clare PCCs oppose the proposals. I believe that a letter has been sent to you today on behalf of the St Clare's PCC by their secretary confirming this and commending the St Francis submission to you.

If you have any queries or there are any problems with the submission please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,
Alison Watson
nt from Windows Mail

Heart of the Park



ST FRANCIS, LEIGH PARK
PASTORAL REORGANISATION SUBMISSION
MAY 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The PCCs of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park have engaged with the process of Pastoral Reorganisation in a genuine and determined manner. As we will set out in the following sections of this submission, we are passionate about the community we serve and we are ambitious for mission here. However, the Vicar, Rev Jonathan Jeffery, was told in his initial interview about reorganisation, and we have been told since, that the proposals are about “doing ministry differently” here. There has been no coherent explanation of what this means. We have been told that while Jonathan may choose to apply for a new post in the new parish, he is not included in the plans and that he will be actually dispossessed of his post. The effect of this is that, under the current proposals, he is likely to be excluded from continuing to lead ministry in this place. In the course of the process the public has been told that the church has failed this community, that there has been “poor engagement” with residents¹; we have been advised that the Church of England has let the estates down by continuing to allow mission and ministry to happen in the way it does here. Our lay ministry, together with Jonathan's ordained ministry, has been described to us by the Diocesan Mission Development Officer as an old skin which will not hold New Wine. We have been told that this is not a slur on us or our work in this place.

We are hugely saddened to have been regarded as a block to mission and as having contributed to a sense of failure here. The idea that others consider that we have hindered the flourishing of the Gospel in this place is painful to us and it also frustrates us because it is based on a model of success and an understanding of this community which has no depth and is, in our view, flawed.

We are prayerful and outward focused and we know this community and what happens in it. We are simultaneously realistic about and ambitious for ministry here. In ways which will be detailed later in the submission, it is our contention that the Diocese began this process without any understanding of the grass roots reality of estates ministry in this place or any meaningful dialogue about the way forward and that they have pursued pastoral reorganisation here without due regard to these matters or to the openly expressed views of the community. We continue to believe that, as a result of this, the process has been deeply damaging and that it has produced a proposal which is neither dynamic and creative enough nor sufficiently rooted in the soil of this community.

Whilst we acknowledge that the Diocese is genuine in its desire to further mission here, we do not believe that the proposals under consideration take sufficient account of our voice or that of the wider community or that they reflect the realities and needs of ministry here; we do not believe that they have a firm foundation in terms of pastoral understanding, or properly take into account the singular and evidenced ability of the existing incumbents to contribute to the better cure of souls in these benefices² as part of a new, dynamic and flexible co-working arrangement. For these reasons and more we do not believe that the current proposals provide the best model for the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England across these estates, pastorally, evangelistically, socially or ecumenically³.

We therefore respectfully oppose the proposal on the grounds detailed within the following subsections of Sections 2 of this document:-

Section 2 (i)	Objection 1 - The process
Section 2 (ii)	Objection 2 - The current proposal
Section 2 (iii)	Objection 3 - The legislation

This submission and these objections largely follow the submission we produced to the Diocese during the formal consultation period earlier this year - a copy of which is appended (at Appendix 1) - but certain details have been included here to assist your understanding or where there have been developments since that initial document was produced. That submission also contained our counter proposal which now forms Section 3 of this current document, for your information.

Yours in Christ



Alison Watson
PCC Secretary
St Francis, Leigh Park

1. The News 19th October 2018 and Diocesan Website 9th October 2018 See Appendix 1a [www.portsmouth.co.uk – Portsmouth Diocesan reveals £9.1m plan to help those in need and grow its churches]
2. See Cheeseman v Church Commissioners and Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Recommended Practice Volume 1 Pastoral Reorganisation Chapter 2.13
3. Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 S3 and S106

SECTION 1 – OUR CONTEXT

We feel that it is important for the Church Commissioners to understand the context of the parishes.

Leigh Park and Warren Park are adjoining housing estates, built after World War II. There is a blurring of their boundaries and, although the estates are architecturally distinct, residents do not consider there to be a significant divide between the communities. At one time they were said to comprise the largest housing estate in Europe. They are bounded as one wider estate area largely by the Petersfield Road to the east, the A3 to the west and a strip of countryside to the north. To the South the Leigh Park estate and parish meets Bedhampton parish.

The parishes themselves have been joined for many years. This is a natural linking, with the dedications of the churches deliberately lending themselves to a spirit of support and collegiality which is entirely accepted by the communities of both estates. The current incumbent, Rev Jonathan Jeffery, has been the vicar of the parishes since February 2001. He, his wife and their three children (aged 17, 14 and 11) live in the Vicarage which is attached to St Francis church.

According to Church Urban Fund statistics, compiled using Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 data, both parishes are ranked amongst the most deprived in the country and, therefore, in the Diocese:-

	Population	Deprivation ranking out of 12508 where 1 is the most deprived
St Francis, Leigh Park	13,099	536
St Clare, Warren Park	3,278	387

The primary phase schools in the parishes are amongst the 5 most deprived schools in Hampshire Education Authority and issues relating to child and working age poverty, lack of educational qualification, lone parenthood and social housing feature significantly in the statistical analysis. The social and economic challenges that these matters represent are complex and profound. Nevertheless, historically the reputation of the estates has provided an unfair reflection of life here. These are loving and joyful communities, filled with brilliant people who we are proud to stand alongside and call our friends and neighbours.

The parish churches are well established and well regarded on the estates. Whilst Sunday worship is traditional, missional outreach is innovative and community focused. Ministry here is at once traditional and original, weaving an organic and holistic network of spiritual support across the area, and is recognised by the community as achieving this.

A worked example of what this looks like can be seen by considering the occasional office statistics for the two parishes (combined) in 2018 alongside information about four significant community projects run across the parishes in the same year.

Weddings	7
Funerals	27
Baptisms	37

Prayer Spaces in Schools Project - more than 700 children engaged [Portsmouth Diocese MOF funded]
Feedback extract at Appendix 2

Starlight Festival - community Christmas launch with live camel procession [Portsmouth Diocese MOF funded]

Feedback extract at Appendix 3

Food Poverty initiative - part-time community worker employed by the Diocese to work alongside St Francis team engaged with Munch Initiative at Park Community School. Hands on involvement with community foodbank, run from St Francis church building

Community Panto - cast and crew of 45+, cross-community production at St Clare's. Weekly rehearsals at

St Clare's from September to November. Three performances. Sold out

Obviously, this snapshot does not provide a full picture of ministry on the estates where individual pastoral and spiritual care, exemplary and extensive schools involvement (81 school assemblies and 33 teaching sessions in 2018), wide and varied community engagement and gentle leadership are incorporated into our offer daily. However, it will give you the beginnings of an understanding about the parishes. In addition we attach at Appendix 4 details from Mission Statistics data.

Our parishes are not complacent nor are they failing to reach our community. Our buildings need repair, our Vicar and our officers need support and resourcing, but together with them we are imaginative and courageous, creative and bold; we are ambitious and grounded, enterprising and experienced; there is very little we won't try in our aspiration for ministry here and, by the grace of God, our sometimes unorthodox approach combined with our love and commitment are met at the grass roots of our community with love, trust and generosity. It is our belief that the leadership of our Vicar and the style of ministry he provides is at the heart of this.

In Spring 2018 St Francis PCC began tentative work on a five year plan for mission and growth. We started by developing our vision and we present that to you now, tying in as it does with our strap line "Heart of the Park" and representing the depth and breadth of our missional engagement and commitment. It remains our vision and it is at the heart of our response to the Diocesan proposals for pastoral reorganisation in this place.

OUR SHARED VISION

We will share
the Good News that people are
made by God, known by God
and loved by God –
transforming the way they think about themselves,
others, their community,
the world around them
and God.

1. SPIRITUALITY

We will provide holistic and seamless opportunity for reflection on the mysteries of the world and our part in them and so encourage spiritual maturity and a developing understanding of the fullness of life.

2. WORSHIP

We will create authentic worship which is true to our aim and communicates it
- peaceful, embracing, encouraging, joyful, meaningful, making connections; holding its integrity; true to the people we serve and to God.

3. CREATIVE USE OF OUR SACRED SPACE

We will create space for encounter with each other and with God.

4. SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

We will stand in solidarity with our neighbours as we face life's challenges together.

5. COMMUNITY COHESION

We will work with, alongside and for our neighbours and community partners to create a community of nurture, learning and opportunity where all can flourish and grow.

Heart of the Park

St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park

SECTION 2 – OBJECTIONS

SECTION 2 (i): OBJECTION 1 – THE PROCESS

We object to the proposal on the grounds that, despite following the requirements of the legislation and despite members of Bishop's Council attending meetings with the PCC, there has been a lack of meaningful consultation in the process in terms of genuine dialogue and shared input in decision making. This has resulted in miscommunication, misinformation, disconnect, and a proposal which ignores the voice of this community and which demonstrates a lack of understanding of the needs of this place and ministry here, giving the distinct impression of pre judgement.

2(i) a Background Issues

In Spring 2018, shortly after we began work on our current vision and plan, Jonathan contacted the Archdeacon of Portsdown to ask for advice regarding the appointment of a PCC secretary. She referred him to the Diocesan Strategic Manager Simon Whitbread and requested that Simon and Jonathan meet to have an exploratory conversation ahead of the Diocese making a Strategic Development Fund bid. She did not explain the implications of this or refer to the possibility of pastoral reorganisation. She did not speak to Jonathan herself, either in person or by phone and she did not engage with him in relation to ministry in the parishes.

Jonathan arranged to meet with Simon Whitbread and the Diocesan Mission Development Officer Andrew Hargreaves. He had never met either of them before and thought he was engaging in dialogue about resourcing ministry in the parishes. He has reported being open and honest with them and he shared the parish vision and plan with them. He heard no more. When he raised related matters for discussion with the Archdeacon she referred him to Simon and did not speak to him. When the PO9 Pioneers - who worked across Leigh Park, Warren Park and West Leigh, but who were based in Leigh Park - left, Jonathan was informed by his West Leigh colleague Karina Green (who was/is the area dean) that they would not be replaced immediately and that a part-time community worker post would be put in temporarily while it was decided what should happen next. Jonathan was not included in that decision although, when he raised the matter, he was told that he could express his opinion to Simon and Karina if he wished to. He did this. In June, on his request, he secured a second meeting with Simon Whitbread. At this meeting there was a general conversation about the parishes, and about the Diocese bidding for funding from the SDF to help resource parishes such as ours, but there were no specifics and no hint of a pastoral reorganisation situation.

The next time Jonathan heard from the Diocese was in October. On Tuesday 2nd October he received an email calling him to a meeting at the Diocesan offices on Friday 5th. The meeting was attended by Jonathan, a representative from HR and the Deputy Diocesan Secretary, Jenny Hollingsworth. No Archdeacon was present. Jonathan was informed that a pastoral reorganisation was to be proposed by Bishop's Council when they met on Monday 8th October. He was advised of the bare bones of the proposal and the general timescales. He was told that if the proposal went through his post would no longer exist, that he might choose to apply for a post in the new scheme and that if he did not secure such a post he would be compensated for loss of office. He was advised that the reorganisation was about "doing ministry differently" in Leigh Park and Warren Park, although the meaning of this was not explained. There was to be, it transpired, a public meeting ten days later to launch an informal public consultation, although he was not given the details of that meeting immediately.

2 (i) b The Public Meeting and Informal Consultation

Together, and in complete (evidenced) agreement with each other, Jonathan and Karina Green (vicar of West Leigh) prepared a statement to be read in church on Sunday 7th October outlining what they had been told. Karina suggested that paper copies be available for people to take away and Jonathan agreed. A parishioner posted her copy on Facebook. As a result of this, the wider community began to learn about the proposal and in a very short time a petition and a dedicated Facebook page had been set up (see Page 6).

When, on 9th October, an article appeared on the Diocesan website and Facebook page in which Bishop Christopher enthusiastically celebrated the initiative but failed to mention that the effect would be clergy being dispossessed of their office, the Leigh Park community was already expressing its opinion.

By the time the public meeting came about a week later feelings in the community were running high. The Diocese refused to allow the meeting to happen in a convenient location for residents and instead insisted it take place in Cowplain, which is almost impossible to access from the estates by public transport in the evening. As people became increasingly vocal about this the Diocese offered to run a coach/mini bus from the churches to the venue rather than change the venue. This spoke volumes to the community about the process and the Diocese's understanding of the estates. It was felt that the Diocese did not want or was not expecting many people to attend.

The meeting itself on the 17th October was packed. There were representatives from across the Deanery, but there were also large numbers of people from the wider Leigh Park community who had come to show solidarity with the church family in general and with Jonathan and Karina in particular. The presentation was couched in church terms but was generic and, it seems, prepared for all the public meetings across the Diocese. See Appendix 5.

Not surprisingly, it was unhappily received. It was clear to the community representatives that the presentation team had no working knowledge of the estates themselves nor the style or substance of the existing mission and ministry offered within them. For example, the presentation suggested we might be able to run a FoodBank under a new scheme, which drew derisive comments from all present, since the community FoodBank is run by a community team from St Francis church and the co-ordinator was sitting in the front row!

At no point in the presentation did any of the team mention that one result of the proposal was that Jonathan and Karina would lose their posts and be, in effect (though not, we acknowledge, in law), made redundant. Many people in the audience addressed this issue head on however, since the community leadership and ministry offered by the current incumbents touches their lives in profound and significant ways and they had come to express and share their thoughts about that. The atmosphere became confrontational as they became increasingly frustrated at not being heard. The team appeared by degrees to be alarmed, angry and defensive but they refused to answer questions and refused to engage with the comments being made. People who were giving their testimony about what ministry in Leigh Park meant to them were told to write or email their thoughts - betraying a desperate lack of sensitivity in all respects. Towards the end the Archdeacon said that she was there to talk about Mission and Ministry, not to be drawn on personal matters.

The community concern about the public meeting continued after the meeting itself. Although we had been assured that comments would be recorded, the notes produced (See Appendix 7) and posted on the Diocesan website did not properly reflect the tone and feeling of the meeting (see Appendix 8 for example comment on notes by community representative). In addition, the memo at the top of the notes states "...where the same point was made multiple times, it is recorded once" which necessarily means that the notes are not a proper reflection of the weight of feeling expressed.

After the meeting, community interest and involvement continued. There was a huge engagement with the informal consultation. By the time it was submitted, the petition contained nearly 700 signatures and the Facebook page was reporting 694 members. Because this was all online we undertook to print hard copies for the Diocese and submitted a folder of community comment ahead of the end of the informal consultation process. We attach this folder at Appendix 9 and commend it to you. It contains the petition submitted to the Diocese, together with Facebook posts and messages from a comments book. We have also added a section of Facebook posts since the end of the public consultation. Please note that it would not have been appropriate or reasonable to create a new petition for this part of the process and its inclusion here is therefore by way of submission to the Church Commissioners. The public response forms a significant part of our objection to the proposal and we will refer to it again later in our submission.

Diocese also received a large number of emails and letters. It is our understanding that the overwhelming majority of this correspondence spoke about the need to retain the current clergy on the estates rather than dispossessing them of office and causing them to apply for new posts as part of an open recruitment process. When Bishop's Council made their recommendation to the Bishop to move forward with the current proposals it seems that no account was taken of this consultation material. The letter of explanation sent to interested parties after the decision makes no reference to it. (See Appendix 10)

2(i) c Misinformation

It became clear to the PCC at a meeting with the Diocesan team and Archdeacon Gavin Collins, who is Archdeacon of the Meon (not our Archdeaconry), that the Vicar was being viewed by the Diocese as responsible for whipping up bad feeling in the parish and that we, along with him, were considered to be obstructive, defensive and angry. Whilst it was true that there was a good deal of anger at what was happening, the rest of this assertion was wrong and Jonathan was not responsible for the public reaction – except in so far as people were angry on his behalf. He had not instigated the petition or Facebook page, and although he had encouraged as people to attend the public meeting he had not rabble roused as was suggested.

Jonathan requested a meeting with Archdeacon Gavin and Jenny Hollingsworth to unpick potential misconceptions about these matters and this proved to be an important meeting. It transpired that Gavin, who has been responsible for all dealings with the parishes since the public consultation meeting but who was not present at that meeting, was under the mistaken impression that Jonathan had unilaterally made the statement on the 7th October, that he had done so in an inflammatory and emotive way, that he had included Karina Green in the statement against her wishes, that he had consequently caused the public meeting to be negative and confrontational and that he did not wish to engage with the consultation process and proposal. None of these things were true and were all addressed at the meeting. Jonathan and Archdeacon Gavin resolved various issues and it is our understanding that since this meeting in December the archdeacon has had a better grasp of Jonathan's role in this process and in the parishes, together with a clearer picture of his impactful and prayerful ministry and leadership here and his vision for the future. However, we believe that much damage had already been done by this point.

We had Jonathan's permission to mention these issues in our formal submission to Bishop's Council because it is important to the PCC that the Council members be fully aware of the pain and damage that this entire process has inflicted upon Jonathan and his family and the extent of the matters they have been called upon to deal with. Part of our vision is that we stand in solidarity with our community, and it should not, then, be a surprise that our community might choose stand in solidarity with us. However, the Diocesan officers understand so little of this community and our part in it that they instead attributed an energised and passionate public response to aggression and hostility and laid that at the Vicar's door, making assumptions about him which they did not check or discuss with him until those assumptions were revealed at a meeting between the Diocesan team and the PCC and Jonathan insisted on meeting to challenge them. We consider this to be an inappropriate handling of matters and to demonstrate a distinctly flawed Diocesan approach to strategic planning for this community and to the pastoral care of the Vicar.

S 2 (i) d The Damaging Nature of Failures in Process and the Diocesan Response

In the light of all of this, we wanted to make it very clear to Bishop's Council that we objected to the manner of the reorganisation process in almost every aspect. We are hungry for missional success here – but we suggest that the manner of introducing innovation has been woeful and counter-productive from the outset. It is true that Jonathan had two initial conversations with Simon Whitbread in which he talked about something of the work that happens here, but he had no idea of the real context of those conversations and had no further involvement. The fact that the Archdeacon has never had a conversation with him about how ministry might develop here, not even at his request a year ago, is surprising to us.

Whatever the intention, the evidence of the process is that the Diocese had discussions about the future of parish in an entirely non-collaborative manner, ahead of launching the consultation process under the Measure in October 2018, and has therefore sought to impose proposals upon us which do not reflect a full and nuanced understanding or a strategy that is deeply embedded in our soil. This is damaging to the church in this place, damaging to us as a PCC and damaging to Jonathan, for whom loving impact here is an imperative.

Furthermore, the public announcements about the matter from the Diocese have suggested a sense of failure in current ministry – that the church has failed the community. As well as being wrong, this is hugely disrespectful and has caused singular personal pain to Jonathan, whose vocation and calling are implicated by it, but who has also had to endure the unhappy circumstance of being accused of rabble-rousing when the community have objected on his behalf in strong and challenging terms.

Whilst pointing this out to members of Bishop's Council we also took the opportunity to remind them that clergy do not work to the same terms as employees. Their entire lives are bound into the work they offer and their families are tied into that – both through the nature of ordained ministry and the fact that their home and security is reliant on the office they hold. The practical implications of the reorganisation for Jonathan, his wife and three school-age children have been profound and a source of incredible stress. Combined with the pastoral implications, they have been almost overwhelming and the PCC was adamant during the consultation process that this should not be underestimated by Bishop's Council. We are aware that Jonathan has met with Bishop Christopher, that the process under the legislation has been followed, that compensation has been explained and that 6 sessions of counselling have been offered to Jonathan and his wife. This, however, is a minimum requirement in our opinion and Bishop's Council should be aware of the real-life impact of hiding behind the basics of legislative process. Our heartfelt formal submission on these matters resulted in the following generic paragraph included in a letter to all interested parties and all those who had expressed an interest during the public consultation:-

“There was an understanding among Bishop's Council members that, especially in the initial stages of this process, there were things that could have been done differently to make it easier for those affected. Although the legally required process was followed, this has not been an easy process for anyone to experience. For the distress that has been felt, they are genuinely sorry,”

This does not really amount to an apology or a clear understanding of the issues and it would appear that no-one feels the need to hold anyone else to account for these matters which have proved to be so damaging.

S 2(i) e Conclusion

All in all, we respectfully submit that the process for development in our parishes has, from the outset, demonstrated an unhelpful use of top-down authority at the expense of meaningful collaboration. On a personal level this has been to the detriment of the health and well being of the incumbent and his family; on a strategic level it has been to the detriment of developing a properly nuanced and bespoke plan exciting and rooted enough to flourish in Leigh Park.

The process has therefore, in our opinion, hindered mission here rather than furthered it, and, indeed, could have halted it without the spirited, but prayerful response of Jonathan and our members.

SECTION 2 (ii):

SECTION 2 – THE CURRENT PROPOSAL

Despite our concerns over process, we are keen to also look to the future and to analyse what excellence in ministry could look like in Leigh Park, supported by appropriate funding and properly resourced. To that end we would like first to set out a summary of the main provisions of the current proposals and then address our objections

Summary of Main Provisions of Draft Proposals

These draft proposals provide for:

- *The termination of the plurality established for the benefice of St Francis, Leigh Park and the benefice of St Clare, Warren Park;*
- *The benefice of St Francis, Leigh Park, the benefice of St Clare, Warren Park and the benefice of West Leigh, St Alban and their constituent parishes to be united;*
- *The establishment of a team ministry for the new benefice of Leigh Park, Warren Park and West Leigh;*
- *The cure of souls to be shared by a team rector and one team vicar (described in correspondence and discussion with the Diocese as a church planting team vicar);*
- *The housing arrangements for the new team;*
- *The future patronage arrangements for the new team*

This is the summary of the formal proposal and constitutes the legal building block for reorganisation in the Diocesan plan. It forms the Scheme around which the wider plan for ministry here will be created.

S2 (ii) a Team Ministry

The proposals are for the creation of a team ministry across Leigh Park, Warren Park and West Leigh. Although Leigh Park and West Leigh are already in the same benefice and work very closely together, the community of West Leigh is very distinct. The church families have good links but their own strong identities which they undoubtedly wish to retain, while the wider communities are largely separated by a busy dual carriageway.

It is our contention that –

A team is a hierarchical device to provide an authority structure within the parishes, but one which neither meets the needs of the community, responds to the authentically expressed voice of the community nor really allows for creative, dynamic, rooted or flexible missional development. It purports to provide the basis for team building and versatile modern ministry which can adapt with the times and yet form the legal structure for streamlined governance and accountability. However, in reality it is just another bounded structure, no better intrinsically than the group ministry model we have suggested in our counter proposal (See Appendix 11). We feel that as well as holding fast to your vision, the important features in parish strategic planning must be praying, networking, consulting and looking to the future using your best resources. It is important not to think that sustainability means forever, but instead to create exciting and dynamic ways to achieve your vision that are thrilling in the now and flexible in the future. A team is not the only way to achieve this and, in the case of these proposals, we believe it is not the best way, since it demands the dispossession of the existing clergy. This fails to utilise the undeniable pastoral and community focussed excellence of the current incumbents, both of whom will be dispossessed of their office with no proposal to designate posts to them. It also undermines the organic and evidenced impact of their ministry by demolishing the trust of the community in the institution of the church.

In addition, it has been suggested that a team is the only structure which could provide a legal framework for streamlined governance and legal accountability. However, we understand that under legislation passed at Synod this Spring it will be possible for “connected” parishes

(in the area of the same group ministry) to establish a single joint council with a single bank account and charitable status, replacing the requirement for multiple PCCs. Since it is new legislation and we are not lawyers it is possible that our interpretation of it is not what is intended by it – although there would be no real reason for it not to be since the main purpose of the legislation is simplification – but when we have repeatedly raised the question with the Diocese they have not offered any explanation or rebutted our suggestion. They have simply ignored it. We cannot, therefore, understand with any clarity why a team is considered to be the only suitable legal framework for mission in these parishes and, without the benefit of an explanation, can only feel that the matter may have been prejudged.

S2 (ii) b Team Vicar/Church Planting Team Vicar

There has been considerable confusion regarding this important element of the formal proposal. The proposal is for a team ministry across the three parishes, led by a team rector assisted by a team vicar. The nature of the team vicar post has not been specified in the formal proposal, which may possibly be as a requirement of the Measure. However, via the press, social media, formal correspondence and in meetings, the Diocese has consistently described the team vicar role as being that of a “church planting” team vicar.

When questions have been raised about this, it has been explained informally by one member of Bishop’s Council that “church planting” team vicar is just one possibility – an example, if you like. However, it has been explained by the Diocese as describing the “direction of travel” and preparing the parishes for the likely outcome. Jenny Hollingsworth has said on numerous occasions that it would have been unfair to the parishes not to phrase it in this way, because otherwise PCCs might suppose that two traditional parish priest roles were likely to be created, which was not the case.

It is our contention that –

- a) The “team vicar” and “church planting team vicar” complication is an unhelpful use of the process, which at best demonstrates a confused approach to communication and consultation and at worst suggests a pre-judgement by the Diocese to one particular option.
- b) A team comprising a team rector and a church-planting team vicar does not meet the needs of our communities, who have spoken volubly during the consultation of their support for the leadership of the current incumbents and the value they place on the style of ministry provided by those incumbents. This is a ministry for all people, in all places, at all times and its worth and impact across the estates has been evidenced by the testimony of hundreds of people who have responded to the public consultation. It is not the ministry that would be provided by a church planting minister.

S2 (ii) c Team Rector and one Team Vicar

Under the Havant Deanery Plan the three parishes have a combined allocation of 3. It has been suggested by the Diocesan team that this would not change, but the third member of the team is not included in the proposal.

It is our contention that –

Whether a group or team is established it is inappropriate to leave the combined parish area of Leigh Park, Warren Park and West Leigh with a legal framework which does not acknowledge the third post. Furthermore, it is inappropriate and unstrategic to leave the parishes in this state of uncertainty pending the planning decisions of a post-Scheme team which would neither include the present incumbents nor enough ministers working in traditional ministry roles to cover the mission field. This would hinder mission on the estates both in the short and long term.

S2 (ii) d Designation of Posts

Note 8 appended to the original Proposal document states:-

8. *As in the previous note, if a benefice is altered by pastoral reorganisation so that it ceases to exist, any clergy holding any offices in relation to that benefice are dispossessed as a result.*

If following the consultation process, these draft proposals were to be made a Scheme, it is intended that an open and transparent recruitment process would be undertaken for all possible offices. Clergy who currently hold offices that would be affected by these draft proposals would be welcome to apply for any of the possible offices

Asked about the position of the current incumbents in the process a Portsmouth Diocesan spokesman was quoted in local press as saying that *"anyone would be able to apply"*¹ for the new roles created if the proposals are accepted (See Appendix 12) It is therefore clear that should the current incumbents of the benefices wish to continue to work within these communities they will be required to apply for a post in the new benefice alongside all other applicants following an advertised recruitment process.

It is our contention that –

- a) Causing the current incumbents to apply for posts in an open recruitment process is not a requirement of the legislation, which specifically allows for posts to be designated under a Scheme
- b) We were told at a PCC meeting that the Bishop had decided not to allow for designations in any of the four schemes proposed in the Diocese because it would not be fair to designate in some schemes and not others. A pre-determined intention not to consider the designation of posts is a fettering of discretion which requires challenge.
- c) In the case of these estates, the evidenced skill and impact of the ministry of the current incumbents together with the openly expressed views of the community during public consultation (See above at 2 (i) b and Appendix 9) mean that this discretion should be considered and exercised, and posts should be designated.
- d) Forming a Scheme under the current proposal and then deciding *"the kind of people we are looking for"*¹ is insulting to the current clergy and a direct failure by the team to listen to the outcome of the public consultation.

S2 (ii) c The Scheme, the Plan and the Community Voice

It is the intention of the Diocesan to pass the proposal and create the Scheme and then appoint to the posts ahead of any discussion about the wider plan or the funding implications. The Diocesan spokesman speaking in The News was further quoted as saying *"if these proposals are ultimately approved, then discussions will take place about the scope of each new post, and then we'll have a better idea of the kind of people we are looking for."*¹

It is clear from our meetings with the team and comments made by both Archdeacon Gavin and Simon Whitbread that the intention is to begin discussions about the wider parish plan after the Scheme is created.

It is our contention that –

- a) Whilst this might be strategically sound in a parish in vacancy or one where there is little community engagement it makes no sense in the current situation. Our PCCs and Vicar are experienced and immersed in the community, as demonstrated by the work that already happens and the response of the wider community to these proposals. We are therefore extremely well placed to work with the Diocese now to develop the broader plan, in the context of our parish vision and the organic and holistic pattern of mission and engagement which we have already created across the area. We have submitted a counter proposal (see Appendix 11) which details our ideas for the future, but these ideas have not been opened up for discussion by the Diocese.
- b) In a further article in the local press¹ Bishop Christopher was quoted as saying "what we offer will depend on what these communities want". (Appendix 13) Subsequently, the community has asked what this really meant since what the community asked for has been entirely overlooked. The

Diocese has suggested that what the Bishop meant was in relation to the next phase of planning (See Appendix 14 for exchange on Diocesan Facebook Page) which again hints at a pre judgement in terms of the proposals currently under consideration.

- c) Forming a Scheme under the current proposal and then deciding "*the kind of people we are looking for*"¹ in these circumstances represents a confused approach by the Diocese to its duty to "*make or assist in making better provision for the cure of souls*"² here because it is not in the best interest of mission across the estates. Indeed, this strategy will create a hiatus and damage existing relationships and initiatives, while the failure to embrace or show any significant impact of the public consultation represents a real reputational risk to the church, which the Diocese appears to have entirely overlooked. This is neither good strategy for the future, nor a demonstration of due regard to the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England in this place.

¹The News Saturday 20th October 2018

²Diocesan spokesman The News: Wednesday 13th February 2019

³The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 S.3 (3)(a)

SECTION 2 (iii):

SECTION 3 – THE MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011 AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Under S1 of the Measure it is “the duty of any person or body carrying out functions under [the] Measure to have due regard to the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England.” This imperative applies to us all and as a PCC we are very aware of the requirement upon us to be pastorally, evangelistically, socially and ecumenically¹ minded in our work as the church on this estate.

We are not experts in the legislation. Indeed, until we found ourselves in the current process we were not familiar with it at all. We have, by necessity, learned more over the last few months however and we would like to raise the following points for consideration. We raised these matters in our submissions to Bishop’s Council.

S2 (iii) a The Spirit of the Legislation

The Measure, as amended by the Mission and Pastoral etc. (Amendment) Measure 2018, specifically allows for clergy to be dispossessed of their posts in pastoral reorganisation. It was always possible for this to happen, but the Amendment Measure changed the rules relating to compensation and therefore made actual dispossession a feasible reality.

The Measure does not, however, encourage the strategic or widespread actual dispossession of clergy posts. It is true that it does not expressly prohibit it, but that is not generally the nature of legislation. We urged members of Bishop’s Council to consider the spirit of the legislation as evidenced in the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Recommended Practice Volume 1:-

Chapter 3.17

The following are examples of situations which give rise to the need for advance preparations by the DMPC secretary in liaison with the archdeacon:

- *Dispossession of office holders*

*Many schemes have the effect of dissolving existing benefices when creating new ones by union or other rearrangement. Where this occurs existing clergy offices (or those held by licensed lay workers) cease to exist. **In most cases the office holders will be appointed by the scheme to an ecclesiastical office with equivalent or higher emoluments, but if they are not they become dispossessed (and entitled to compensation for loss of office).***

Chapter 4.12

The vast majority of dispossessions resulting from pastoral reorganisation schemes will be “technical dispossessions” as it will usually be intended to appoint the person(s) concerned to comparable offices in the new benefices created by the reorganisation as a consequential provision of the scheme and they will therefore not be entitled to compensation. However, amendment of their licenses or statements of particulars to take account of their different responsibilities may be necessary.

Chapter 4.13

*The consent of anyone who would be dispossessed (“technically or otherwise) is not required to the scheme, but it is desirable that the bishop or his representative should contact him or her at an early stage to explain the consequences of the scheme. **It is rare for dispossessions giving rise to compensation to arise but where it is unavoidable, detailed advice on the payment of compensation is provided in Appendix 1.6.***

Furthermore, the presentation slides from the Church Commissioners’ 2018 conferences on the amendments to the Measure (available on the Church of England website) state: –

Why the change?

- *Lack of use of current provisions*
- *Cost (are these two bullet points perchance linked...?)*
- ***Both of which have sometimes resulted in unviable or undesirable pastoral arrangements continuing.***
- *We can add a new clause to schemes that names all assistant curates so they “transfer” seamlessly to the new benefice(s).*
- *No need to resign to bring schemes into effect, and so the compensation provisions would not apply to them.*
- *In most cases our much-loved “6 month delay” clause is no longer required; schemes can be brought into effect more quickly.*
- *However, if a dispossession really is happening, the 6 month delay clause must be used as it is under the old system.*

It is our contention that –

- a) Although the 2011 Measure allows for actual dispossessions to occur, the supporting documentation suggests that the context for this is unusual, “rare” or where it is unavoidable. We therefore think that the implications of using this legislation in strategic planning to dispossess up to 10 clergy of their posts in a bank of four schemes across the Diocese is an inappropriate use of the Measure which requires challenge.
- b) In relation to our own circumstances, the highlighted sections of the Code of Practice should be given due weight. It is clear that the expectation behind the Measure is that ***“the vast majority of dispossessions resulting from pastoral reorganisation schemes will be “technical dispossessions” as it will usually be intended to appoint the person(s) concerned to comparable offices in the new benefices created by the reorganisation as a consequential provision of the scheme”*** and that only where current pastoral arrangements are ***unviable or undesirable*** should actual dispossession occur, triggering the new compensation provisions. The current pastoral arrangements are neither unviable – forming, as they do, a budgeted part of the Deanery Plan – nor undesirable. We have already evidenced the desirability of the work, impact and commitment of the current incumbents in the existing pastoral roles. Furthermore, although we cannot speak for Karina in West Leigh, we are aware that Jonathan has never been approached by the Diocese for discussions in these terms. We therefore believe that the current proposal which has the effect of actually dispossessing him of his post is an inappropriate use of the Measure.
- c) Even in the circumstances of our counter proposal regarding a group ministry not being successful we maintain that the Diocese would better further mission on these estates by designating posts in the new structure to the existing office holder, Jonathan and Karina

¹ Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 S3 and S106

S2 (iii) b The Gaulby Judgement

The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Recommended Practice Volume 1 also contains, at Chapter 2.13 a precis of the Gaulby Judgement. We have heard it argued by several participants in the process, particularly from the Diocese team, that in engaging in pastoral reorganisation it is unhelpful to take into account the current incumbents and that it is not appropriate to undertake strategic planning and reorganisation that builds on the strengths and skills of existing personnel. The review of the Gaulby judgement as contained in the Code of Practice says the following:-

The following points emerge from the judgement:

The need to have regard to the traditions, needs and characteristics of individual parishes in a proposed pastoral reorganisation can include consideration of 'interpersonal factors'; Such consideration can include the relationships between parishes, between parishioners, or between clergy as well as the ability of particular incumbents to contribute to the better cure of souls; The organisation of the diocese into parishes is for the ease and benefit of the people and not the incumbent.

A closer study of the case itself reinforces this. The Rev Cheeseman had argued that a pastoral reorganisation scheme's justification "must wholly exclude any reference to or consideration of who are the incumbents of the benefices affected."¹ In a majority judgement their Lordships disagreed with this contention and said:-

"It can also be seen that the exclusion would often give rise to difficulties in practice. Some arrangements of parishes, particularly in these days of benefices including a number of parishes or former parishes and the use of teams, inevitably create situations which may or may not be satisfactory from a pastoral point of view depending upon the gifts of the persons from time to time involved. Incumbents of exceptional gifts may be able to make certain combinations of parishes work when less gifted persons cannot. To exclude all consideration of the contributions to the successful cure of souls in the diocese that the incumbents of the benefices affected could make would be to adopt an artificiality which finds no support in the drafting of the legislation and would obstruct its purpose. Further, if the actual position is to be disregarded, what is the assumption which the Bishop and the Commissioners are required to make? Are they to postulate some "average" incumbent and then make their assessment on that basis disregarding the fact that the present incumbents do not and no incumbent is ever likely to equate to that average? This point has only to be stated in order to see that the argument cannot be sustained."

It is our contention that –

- a) Although this case refers to previous legislation it remains persuasive legal argument as evidenced by its inclusion in the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Recommended Practice (as amended March 2019)
- b) It gives a clear guide that the gifts and skills of the existing incumbents with regard to the furtherance of mission and their ability to contribute to the better cure of souls should be taken into account when considering and creating a pastoral reorganisation scheme
- c) In putting together the current proposal, which has been described by the Diocesan team as taking an opportunity to "do ministry differently" in Leigh Park, no consideration has been taken of these factors. Indeed, it has been suggested to the PCC that to take Jonathan and Karina into account would be wrong and that the support they have received from the wider community constitutes the cult of personality. We believe that this is a wrong and damaging assertion both pastorally and in law.

¹ Cheeseman v Church Commissioners – Privy Council 1999

S2 (iii) c Adequate Evidence

In its précis of the Gaulby judgement the Code of Practice states:-

"There must be adequate evidence of any factors taken into consideration in a proposed reorganisation; any bad faith would invalidate a proposed scheme."¹

In the current process the officers of the Diocese have:-

- repeatedly talked about “doing ministry differently” in our parishes without clearly explaining what that means or why it applies to Leigh Park and Warren Park rather than elsewhere
- not given any worked examples or evidence of estates such as ours flourishing through pastoral reorganisation of this kind. Not given any examples of anywhere flourishing through pastoral reorganisation of this kind. We don’t know if this is because there are no fully worked examples with clear impact indicators, or if it just because we are not sufficiently important to be included in that conversation
- failed to address the specific points raised in our submission
- overlooked our questions and concerns about the proposals and the legislation
- ignored and then overturned our Parish Vision without meaningful dialogue concerning an alternative, reinforcing a top-down, high handed authority structure that is damaging to mission on the ground
- failed to visit the parishes to learn about the community despite early assurances that this would happen and the Bishop’s assurance that the plans had “been developed from a number of detailed studies that we have undertaken in these areas.”²
- refused to properly engage with the concept of mediation which we offered in our submission in accordance with Chapter 2.39 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Recommended Practice Volume 1. No representative of Bishop’s Council made reference to this, but at a subsequent meeting we asked the Deputy Diocesan Secretary how the Council had addressed the possibility of mediation in its decision-making meeting. She said that mediation doesn’t always work and therefore they wouldn’t do it because it would waste time.
- misled the community about what they were consulting about in what time frame
- most significantly of all, ignored all reference to the outcome of the informal consultation phase

It is our contention that –

In light of all of this there has not been adequate evidence of the factors taken into consideration in putting together the proposals for the proposed reorganisation

¹ The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Recommended Practice Volume 1 also contains, at Chapter 2.13 a precis of the Gaulby Judgement.

² The News 19th October 2018 and Diocesan Website 9th October 2018 See Appendix 1a

SECTION 3 – OUR HOPES FOR THE WAY FORWARD

We have considered all of this in great detail because we are passionate about these estates and about our contribution to that work of mission for which we are all responsible. We are positive and excited by the possibilities for ministry here. This section of our submission broadly revisits the counter-proposal we made to Bishop's Council. (Appendix 11)

We would be happy to talk with you in more detail about our counter proposal or to engage in mediation with Bishop's Council as set out in Chapter 2.39 of the 2011 Measure Code of Practice if that would be considered helpful. We ask that you please read this Section in the context of all that we have said in the previous sections.

St Francis and St Clare PCCs have worked together with the leadership of one vicar for many years and so, in this process, we have met together and discussed the way forward; we have prayed about it; we have asked questions of the Diocese, of ourselves and of each other. We have offered and encouraged meetings with St Alban's PCC.

Our prayers have led us back to our vision, created last spring and shared with you in Section 1. It is a dynamic vision. It is missional in focus and provides a creative framework for strategic development. It is authentic to these places, to what we, in Leigh Park and Warren Park, believe about mission and ministry, and to the Gospel.

In the context of pastoral reorganisation, we find we must be true to this vision and must seek to find a way forward that creates the best opportunity for it to become reality. For the reasons we have highlighted already we struggle to agree to a legal scheme without a much clearer picture of the plan that will be scaffolded on to it. To proceed in any other way will be to create a vision vacuum which will entirely ignore the prayerful and innovative vision we have already begun to work towards.

Alongside all of this and everything we have raised in the preceding Sections of our submission we have, of course, noted that the Diocese undertook a significant piece of community consultation across the estates during the public consultation phase of the process. The Diocese launched the community consultation at the very well attended public meeting and advertised it widely through positive endorsements from senior clergy in the local press.

It is unlikely that any of us will have the resources to create a better opportunity for garnering information about what the people of these estates think, or to hear the voice of this community, in the near future. By any standards the response would be considered significant. For a community often disengaged from formal authority structures and said by the Diocese to be uncommitted to the church, it might be considered extraordinary. People responded energetically to the consultation and engaged with the issue that they felt mattered to them. The weight of their responses contributed to Bishop's Council delaying its response by eight weeks but had no impact on the outcome.

We are aware of the general thrust of the feedback gathered during this process. This seemed unanimously to support retaining posts for the existing clergy, affirming their leadership and endorsing a model built around their existing outreach and ministry.

We have also made enquiry of the Diocese and received the following reply to questions raised:-

Question 7: Please clarify your general understanding of the public view expressed during the informal consultation period and the strength of that view.

Answer: My understanding of the public view is that there is a varied response as to whether additional resource would be welcomed. Some have said that they do not want it and others have said it would be good. There has been strong support for both Jonathan and Karina to remain in their current roles.

Question 8: Please explain the ways in which the feedback submitted by the public during the informal consultation has caused changes to the proposal.

Answer: (a) All of the above PCCs agreed that less administrative burden and duplication of administration across the three parishes would be welcomed;

(b) All of the PCCs agreed that they would be happy to work more closely together;

(c) There was concern about the Petersfield Road separating West Leigh from Leigh Park and Warren Park and concern over patterns of worship and so each parish wished to retain its parish church.

(d) The structure of a team ministry was suggested.

We think that, alongside our own vision for these estates – indeed, because of that vision – it is important to take account of the voice of these communities.

It is our contention that, for all the reasons we have previously outlined, the existing proposal meets neither of these imperatives and we oppose it on this basis.

We do not feel that the Diocese has fully heard or reflected on our understanding of these communities, our engagement, our ability to reach the hard to reach, our versatility, our creativity, our inclusivity, our prayerful impact or our wide and generous enthusiasm for embracing innovative forms of ministry. We also do not feel that any appropriate account has been taken of the impact in mission and leadership of the incumbent, Rev Jonathan Jeffery and his evidenced abilities in relation to pastoral encounter, community engagement, teaching and encouragement – in short the furtherance of mission and the cure of souls.

Clergy commitment in areas such as Leigh Park is vital to the mission of the church. It requires tenacity, resilience, dedication and patience. It is a self-giving ministry and, to be effective, it necessitates long-term faithfulness and genuine acceptance and love. Jonathan has demonstrated, and continues to demonstrate, these qualities to this community in ways which reach the hardest-to-reach and which weave an embrace around the estates that speaks of the love of Christ. In return, the people of this community love and trust him and welcome the church into their lives. We feel that, as a matter of strategic policy, he and Karina Green have been overlooked and underestimated in this process and in the proposals, and we consider that inappropriate and damaging to mission outcomes.

We acknowledge that our Sunday attendance figures are not high, but we refer you again to Section 1 and the snapshot of data and projects from 2018. We shouldn't need to justify ourselves in this process and it is a measure of its damaging nature that we feel we must. In this context however we must emphasize again that we are currently shackled by a lack of resources and a lack of support which have exhausted and overstretched us, but we are not shackled by brittleness or inflexibility or inward-focussed self-preservation.

We feel that the formal proposals, together with the indicated “direction of travel” in relation to the church planting team vicar role, reflect neither the breadth of our vision nor the depth of the public response to the informal consultation. At first the proposals sound cutting edge and change-driven, but on closer inspection they are static and bounded by a traditional authority structure and a culture which labels and defines when we should be embracing and co-working. We do not use our counter proposal simply to maintain the status quo. We are not afraid of change, but we think that what creates fabulousness is people and communities being encouraged to develop, evolve and innovate from a firm foundation. This is the language of our thinking.

Whilst we care about our buildings, we care much more about what they represent than what they are. We want to blend the flexibility brought by recognising our distinctiveness with the unifying nature of co-governance; we want to embrace and celebrate everything that is creative, generous and wise about our “now” offer, by recognising, developing and enhancing its deep networked impact across our communities and we want to blend that with alternative forms of ministry which bring new and dynamic energy; we want to offer sacred space that speaks of otherness and sacred space that speaks into the heart of today and tomorrow; we want to work collaboratively with others with whom we share common core values in an atmosphere of mutual respect and open dialogue.

These estates are loved and known through the ministry of the church here, and the church and the Good News of Jesus are loved and known in return. We know this soil and in organising for the future here the Diocese should not act as if starting from scratch, but from this place of organic strength – which brings with it its own gently powerful meaning of love and mission.

We believe that, with the people of St Alban's and alongside the skilled leadership of the current incumbents, we can offer that firm foundation on which to build and a unique and meaningful insight into what will contribute to the better cure of souls across the estates. Like the wise man, we have dug deeply and laid that foundation on rock (Luke 6: 46-49) and we continue to do this as we seek to build up and out. We are longing for the opportunity to combine all that we are with all that the Diocese can offer here to create a visionary model for estates ministry in this place.

Our passion for the Gospel and for these estates demands nothing less.

In short, our love for God and for our community, together with the voice of that community and our ambition for ministry here push at the boundaries of the current proposal and find it wanting.

We therefore put forward an alternative for these parishes:-

1. That St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park become one parish
2. That the parish of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park create a formal group under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 with the parish of St Alban, West Leigh governed by a joint council (under impending legislation)
3. That the post of incumbent of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park be designated to the existing incumbent of those parishes
4. That the incumbency of St Albans parish remain
5. That the third post granted to the estates (proposed group) under the Havant Deanery Plan, and previously held by the PO9 Pioneers, be held by a Church Planting Minister with responsibility for three simultaneous church plants at venues across the group (Example venues - H & W Football Club, West Leigh; The Hub, Leigh Park; St Clare's Church, Warren Park)

Points 1 – 5 form the legal proposal

6. SDF bid to include funding for a Business Manager to be accountable to the incumbents and to the joint council and responsible for all matters of administrative compliance
7. SDF bid to also include funding for a community pioneer with responsibility for managing a CAP debt centre and developing the food poverty project drawing clients from across the group
8. Incumbents to work with the Business Manager on buildings projects in relation to community space and hall development at St Francis and St Clare and church building issues at St Albans
9. Significant social enterprise initiatives developed
10. Group to work as a co-sharing and cohesive collaborative whole serving its distinct communities and its vision and mission imperatives by the grace of God, the joy of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

Points 6 – form our suggested plan for wider missional development

We believe that this plan, incorporating at points 1 – 5 a legal framework proposal, is strategically sound and missionally exciting.

It provides a well constructed framework for drawing people into “the adventure of discipleship”¹ and is complimentary to the House of Bishop's Statement on Church Planting (June 2018) and the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission².

is flexible, builds on firm foundations, uses the existing clergy who can remain as valued and trusted leaders on these estates, gives an equal voice and standing to all three established churches, echoes the feedback gathered during public consultation, increases capacity and allows for dynamic development and innovation.

Furthermore, it is a plan which is rooted in community and authentic to our voice and in this regard it is the embodiment of the recent General Synod motion:-

That this Synod, committed to the Church of England's vocation to be a Christian presence in every community, and noting the historic marginalisation of social housing estates in the policies of both church and nation:

- a) commend the vision of the Estates Evangelism Task Group to see a serving, loving and worshipping Christian community on every significant social housing estate in the country;*
- b) urge every diocese to build ministry and mission on estates into its mission strategies, clergy deployment plans and SDF funding bids; and*
- c) give thanks for the Christian leadership offered by people from estate communities and calls upon the Archbishops' Council, the Church Commissioners and the NCIs, through their work under the Renewal and Reform programme, to enable the voices of people from estates and other marginalised communities to be heard and heeded in the life of the Church of England.*

The plan we propose is true to our vision in Leigh Park and Warren Park and authentic to the community narrative which has been heard so loudly through the public consultation and which we know and understand through our experience and knowledge of these estates.

It creates a singular opportunity for new ministry initiatives in the context of a trusted leadership, which is imaginative, passionate and courageous in its aspiration for ministry here.

It utilises the best resources of these parishes in the now, and for the future, building on what is already fabulous and facilitating ever broader and deeper engagement.

We commend it to you and to all in authority over us.

St Francis Church,
Riders Lane,
Leigh Park

May 2019

¹ House of Bishop's Statement on Church Planting (June 2018)

² The Five Marks of Mission are: To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom; To teach, baptise and nurture new believers; To respond to human need by loving service; To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation; To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

(Bonds of Affection- 1984 ACC-6 p49, Mission in a Broken World-1990 ACC-8 p101)

PENDIX 1
PCC SUBMISSION TO BISHOP'S COUNCIL MARCH 2019

MISSION &

29 MAR 2019

RESOURCES

Alison Watson,
St Francis Church,
Riders Lane,
Leigh Park.
28th March 2019

Ms Jenny Hollingsworth,
The Secretary,
Portsmouth Diocesan
Mission and Pastoral Committee,
Peninsular House,
Portsmouth.

Dear Ms Hollingsworth

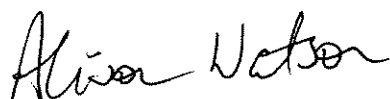
Re: Proposed Pastoral Re-organisation St Francis Church, Leigh Park, St Clare's Church,
Warren Park, & St Alban's Church, West Leigh

I have been asked to write to you in response to the plans of the diocese for pastoral re-organisation including the parish of St Francis, Leigh Park of which I am PCC Secretary. I am making the formal response on behalf of St Francis PCC by the deadline of 29th March 2019.

We have been meeting, talking and praying with St Clare's Church PCC with whom we already work very closely. We have met on one occasion with St Alban's and on numerous occasions with members of the Diocesan team and Bishop's Council.

The PCC of St Francis, Leigh Park opposes the current proposal. We do not consider that it gives best effect to the voice of our community or the mission imperatives at the heart of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011. We have set out our reasoning and our counter-proposal in the attached document, which constitutes our full and formal response for the consideration of Bishop's Council.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Watson
PCC Secretary

Heart of the Park



ST FRANCIS, LEIGH PARK PASTORAL REORGANISATION SUBMISSION **MARCH 2019**

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INTRODUCTION

The PCCs of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park have engaged with the process of Pastoral Reorganisation in a genuine and determined manner. From the outset, our Vicar, Rev Jonathan Jeffery, has been told that the reorganisation is about “doing ministry differently” here. We have been told that while he may choose to apply for a new post in the new parish, he is not included in the plans and that he will be actually dispossessed of his post. The effect of this is that, under the current pastoral reorganisation proposal, he is likely to be excluded from continuing to lead any ministry in this place. In the course of the process we have been advised that the Church of England has let the estates down by continuing to allow mission and ministry to happen in the way it does here.

We are saddened to be regarded as a block to mission and as having contributed to a sense of failure here. The idea that others consider that we have hindered the flourishing of the Gospel in this place is painful to us, but it also frustrates us. We are prayerful and outward focused and we know this community and what happens in it. We are simultaneously realistic about and ambitious for ministry here. It is our view that the Diocese began this process without any understanding of the grass roots reality of estates ministry in this place or any meaningful dialogue about the way forward. As a result of this, we believe that the process has been deeply damaging and has failed to produce a proposal that is either dynamic or rooted in the soil of this community. Whilst we happily acknowledge that the Diocese is genuine in its desire to further mission here, we do not believe that the current proposal takes sufficient account of our voice or that of the wider community; we do not believe that it has a firm foundation, or properly takes into consideration the singular and evidenced ability of the existing incumbents to contribute to the better cure of souls¹ in these benefices as part of a new, dynamic and flexible co-working arrangement. For these reasons and more we do not believe that the current proposal is the best model for furthering the mission of the Church of England here, pastorally, evangelistically, socially or ecumenically².

We therefore respectfully make our own submission and counter proposal, which we set out in the attached chapters. There are 4 chapters and an appendix giving context and background to our position and detailing our counter proposal. We commend them to you.

Yours in Christ,



Alison Watson

PCC Secretary
St Francis, Leigh Park

¹See Cheeseman v Church Commissioners and Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Recommended Practice – Volume 1 – Pastoral Reorganisation Chapter 2.13

²Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 S3 and S106

CHAPTER 1
OUR CONTEXT

Leigh Park and Warren Park are adjoining housing estates, built after World War II. There is a blurring of their boundaries and residents do not consider there to be a significant divide between the communities. At one time they were said to comprise the largest housing estate in Europe. They are bounded as one wider estate area largely by the Petersfield Road to the east, the A3 to the west and a strip of countryside to the north. To the South the Leigh Park estate and parish meets Bedhampton parish.

The parishes themselves have been joined for many years. This is a natural linking, with the dedications of the churches deliberately lending themselves to a spirit of support and collegiality which is entirely accepted by the communities of both estates. The current incumbent, Rev Jonathan Jeffery, has been the vicar of the parishes since February 2001.

According to Church Urban Fund statistics, compiled using Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 data, both parishes are ranked amongst the most deprived in the country and, therefore, in the Diocese:-

	Population	Deprivation ranking out of 12508 where 1 is the most deprived
St Francis, Leigh Park	13,099	536
St Clare, Warren Park	3,278	387

The primary phase schools in the parishes are amongst the 5 most deprived schools in Hampshire Education Authority and issues relating to child and working age poverty, lack of educational qualification, lone parenthood and social housing feature significantly in the statistical analysis. The social and economic challenges that these matters represent are complex and profound. Nevertheless, historically the reputation of the estates has provided an unfair reflection of life here. These are loving and joyful communities, filled with brilliant people who we are proud to stand alongside and call our friends and neighbours.

The parish churches are well established and well regarded on the estates. Whilst Sunday worship is traditional, missional outreach is innovative and community focused. Ministry here is at once traditional and original, weaving an organic and holistic network of spiritual support across the area, and is recognised by the community as achieving this.

A worked example of what this looks like can be seen by considering the occasional office statistics for the two parishes (combined) in 2018 alongside information about four significant community projects run across the parishes in the same year.

Weddings	7
Funerals	27
Baptisms	37

Prayer Spaces in Schools Project - more than 700 children engaged [MOF funded]

Feedback extract at Appendix 3

Starlight Festival - community Christmas launch with live camel procession [MOF funded]

Feedback extract at Appendix 4

Food Poverty initiative - part-time community worker employed by the Diocese to work alongside St Francis team engaged with Munch Initiative at Park Community School. Hands on involvement with community foodbank, run from St Francis church building

Community Panto - cast and crew of 45+, cross-community production at St Clare's. Weekly rehearsals at St Clare's from September to November. Three performances. Sold out

Obviously, this snapshot does not provide a full picture of ministry on the estates where individual pastoral and spiritual care, exemplary and extensive schools involvement (81 school assemblies and 33 teaching

isions in 2018), wide and varied community engagement and gentle leadership are incorporated into our offer daily. However, it will give you the beginnings of an understanding about the parishes. These parishes are not complacent nor are they failing our community. Our buildings need repair, our vicar and our officers need support and resourcing, but together with them we are imaginative and courageous, creative and bold; we are ambitious and grounded, enterprising and experienced; there is very little we won't try in our aspiration for ministry here and, by the grace of God, our sometimes unorthodox approach combined with our love and commitment are met at the grass roots of our community with love, trust and generosity. It is our belief that the leadership of our vicar and the style of ministry he provides is at the heart of this.

In Spring 2018 St Francis PCC began tentative work on a five year plan for mission and growth. We started by developing our vision and we present that to you now, tying in as it does with our strap line "Heart of the Park" and representing the depth and breadth of our missional engagement and commitment. It remains our vision and it is at the heart of our response to the Diocesan proposal for pastoral reorganisation in this place.

OUR SHARED VISION

We will share
 the Good News that people are
 made by God, known by God
 and loved by God –
 transforming the way they think about themselves,
 others, their community,
 the world around them
 and God.

1. SPIRITUALITY

We will provide holistic and seamless opportunity for reflection on the mysteries of the world and our part in them and so encourage spiritual maturity and a developing understanding of the fullness of life.

4. SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

We will stand in solidarity with our neighbours as we face life's challenges together.

3. CREATIVE USE OF OUR SACRED SPACE

We will create space for encounter with each other and with God.

2. WORSHIP

We will create authentic worship which is true to our aim and communicates it
 - peaceful, embracing, encouraging, joyful, meaningful, making connections; holding its integrity; true to the people we serve and to God.

5. COMMUNITY COHESION

We will work with, alongside and for our neighbours and community partners to create a community of nurture, learning and opportunity where all can flourish and grow.

Heart of the Park

St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park

CHAPTER 2

THE PROCESS – OUTLINE AND IMPLICATIONS

In Spring Jonathan had a meeting with a Simon Whitbread and Andrew Hargreaves. He had never met either of them before and thought he was engaging in dialogue about resourcing the parishes. He has reported being open and honest with them and he shared the parish vision and plan with them. He heard no more. When he raised related matters for discussion with the Archdeacon she referred him to Simon and did not speak to him. When the PO9 Pioneers left Jonathan was informed that they would not be replaced immediately and that a part-time community worker post would be put in temporarily while it was decided what should happen next. Jonathan was not included in that decision although, when he raised the matter, he was told that he could express his opinion to Simon and Karina Green if he wished to. He did this. In June, on his request, he secured a second meeting with Simon Whitbread. At this meeting there was a general conversation about the parishes, and about the Diocese bidding for funding from the SDF to help resource parishes such as ours, but there were no specifics and no hint of a pastoral reorganisation situation.

The next time Jonathan heard from the Diocese was in October. On Tuesday 2nd October he received an email calling him to a meeting at Peninsula House on Friday 5th. The meeting was attended by Jonathan, Rachel Brownbill from HR and Jenny Hollingsworth. Jonathan was informed that a pastoral reorganisation was to be proposed by Bishop's Council when they met on Monday 8th October. He was advised of the bare bones of the proposal and the general timescales. He was told that if the proposal went through his post would no longer exist, that he might choose to apply for a post in the new scheme and that if he did not secure such a post he would be compensated for loss of office. He was advised that the reorganisation was about "doing ministry differently" in Leigh Park and Warren Park. There was to be, it transpired, a public meeting ten days later to launch an informal public consultation, although he was not given the details of that meeting immediately.

Together, and in complete (evidenced) agreement with each other, Jonathan and Karina Green (vicar of West Leigh) prepared a statement to be read in church on Sunday 7th October outlining what they had been told. Karina suggested that paper copies be available for people to take away and Jonathan agreed. A parishioner posted her copy on Facebook. As a result of this, the wider community began to learn about the proposal and in a very short time a petition and a dedicated Facebook page had been set up. When, on Tuesday 9th October, Bishop Christopher appeared on the front page of the Portsmouth News celebrating the initiative with extreme enthusiasm, the Leigh Park community was already expressing its opinion.

By the time the public meeting came about a week later feelings in the community were running high. They continue to do so. The Diocese refused to allow the meeting to happen in a convenient location for residents and instead insisted it take place in Cowplain, which is almost impossible to access from the estates by public transport in the evening. As people became increasingly vocal about this the Diocese offered to run a coach/mini bus from the churches to the venue rather than change the venue. This spoke volumes to the community about the process and the Diocese's understanding of the estates.

The meeting itself on the 17th October was packed. There were representatives from across the Deanery, but there were also large numbers of people from the wider Leigh Park community who had come to show solidarity with the church family in general and with Jonathan and Karina in particular. The presentation was couched in church terms but was generic and, it seems, prepared for all the public meetings across the Diocese. Not surprisingly, it was unhappily received. It was clear to the community representatives that the presentation team had no working knowledge of the estates themselves nor the style or substance of the existing mission and ministry offered within them. For example, the presentation suggested we might be able to run a FoodBank under a new scheme, which drew derisive comments from all present, since the community FoodBank is run by a community team from St Francis church and the co-ordinator was sitting in the front row! At no point in the presentation did any of the team mention that one result of the proposal was that Jonathan and Karina would lose their posts and be, in effect (though not, we acknowledge, in law), made redundant. Many people in the audience addressed this issue head on however, since the community

Leadership and ministry offered by the current incumbents touches their lives in profound and significant ways and they had come to express and share their thoughts about that. The atmosphere became confrontational as they became increasingly frustrated at not being heard. The team appeared by degrees to be alarmed, angry and defensive but they refused to answer questions and refused to engage with the comments being made. People who were giving their testimony about what ministry in Leigh Park meant to them were told to write or email their thoughts - betraying a desperate lack of sensitivity in all respects. Towards the end the Archdeacon said that she was there to talk about Mission and Ministry, not be drawn on personal matters.

After the meeting, community interest and involvement continued and, as you are aware, a huge amount of material was received by the Diocese before the end of the informal public consultation. It became clear to the PCC at a meeting with Archdeacon Gavin and the team that the vicar was being viewed by the Diocese as responsible for whipping up bad feeling in the parish and that we, along with him, were considered to be obstructive, defensive and angry.

Jonathan requested a meeting with Archdeacon Gavin and Jenny Hollingsworth to unpick potential misconceptions about these matters and this proved to be an important meeting. It transpired that Gavin, who has been responsible for all dealings with the parishes since the public consultation meeting but who was not present at that meeting, was under the mistaken impression that Jonathan had unilaterally made the statement on the 7th October, that he had done so in an inflammatory and emotive way, that he had included Karina Green in the statement against her wishes, that he had consequently caused the public meeting to be negative and confrontational and that he did not wish to engage with the consultation process and proposal. None of these things were true and were all addressed at the meeting. Jonathan and Archdeacon Gavin resolved the issues and it is our understanding that the archdeacon now has a better understanding of Jonathan's role in this process and in the parishes, together with a clearer picture of his impactful and prayerful ministry and leadership here and his vision for the future.

We have Jonathan's permission to mention these issues however because it is important to the PCC that Bishop's Council are aware of the pain and damage that this entire process has inflicted upon Jonathan and his family and the extent of the matters they have been called upon to deal with. Clergy commitment in areas such as Leigh Park is vital to the mission of the church. It requires tenacity, resilience, dedication and patience. It is a self-giving ministry and, to be effective, it necessitates long-term faithfulness and genuine acceptance and love. Jonathan has demonstrated, and continues to demonstrate, these qualities to this community in ways which reach the hardest-to-reach and which weave an embrace around the estates that speaks of the love of Christ. In return, the people of this community love and trust him and welcome the church into their lives. Part of our vision is that we stand in solidarity with our community, and it should not, then, be a surprise that they might choose stand in solidarity with us.

In the light of this, we want to make it very clear to Bishop's Council that we object to the manner of the reorganisation process in almost every aspect. We are hungry for missional success here – but we suggest that the manner of introducing innovation has been woeful and counter-productive from the outset. It is true that Jonathan had two initial conversations with Simon Whitbread in which he talked about something of the work that happens here, but he had no idea of the real context of those conversations and had no further involvement. The fact that the Archdeacon has never had a conversation with him about how ministry might develop here, not even at his request a year ago, is surprising to us. We are equally surprised that such matters have not formed part of his Ministerial Review, but it seems that he has not been offered Ministerial Review since his last session in January 2016.

Whatever the intention, the evidence of the process is that the Diocese has had discussions about the future of the parish in an entirely non-collaborative manner, ahead of launching the consultation process under the Measure in October 2018, and has therefore sought to impose proposals upon us which do not reflect a full and nuanced understanding or a strategy that is deeply embedded in our soil. This is damaging to the church

in this place, damaging to us as a PCC and damaging to Jonathan, for whom loving impact here is an imperative.

Furthermore, all the public announcements about the matter from the Diocese have suggested a sense of failure in current ministry – that the church has failed the community. As well as being entirely wrong, this is hugely disrespectful and has caused singular personal pain to Jonathan, whose vocation and calling are implicated by it, but who has also had to endure the unhappy circumstance of being accused of rabble-raising when the community have objected on his behalf in strong and challenging terms.

We have already spoken about the self-giving nature of ministry, but we would also like to take this opportunity to remind Bishop's Council that clergy do not work to the same terms as employees. Their entire lives are bound into the work they offer and their families are tied into that – both through the nature of ordained ministry and the fact that their home and security is reliant on the office they hold. The practical implications of the reorganisation for Jonathan, his wife and three school-age children have been profound and a source of incredible stress. Combined with the pastoral implications, they have been almost overwhelming and the PCC is adamant that this should not be underestimated by Bishop's Council. We are aware that Jonathan has met with Bishop Christopher, that the process under the legislation has been followed, that compensation has been explained and that 6 sessions of counselling have been offered to Jonathan and his wife. This, however, is a minimum requirement in our opinion and Bishop's Council should be aware of the real-life impact of hiding behind the basics of legislative process.

All in all, we respectfully submit that the process for development in our parishes has, from the outset, demonstrated an unhelpful use of top-down authority at the expense of meaningful collaboration. On a personal level this has been to the detriment of the health and well being of the incumbent and his family; on a strategic level it has been to the detriment of developing a properly nuanced and bespoke plan exciting and rooted enough to flourish in Leigh Park. The process has therefore, in our opinion, had the potential to hinder mission here rather than further it, and, indeed, would have done so without the spirited, but prayerful response of Jonathan and our members.

We are grateful to Bishop's Council members for taking the time to read our thoughts on the process of pastoral reorganisation in Portsmouth Diocese. We hope that members will understand our position and will feel able to acknowledge privately and publically those areas where the process has failed us, the incumbent and the mission of the Church of England.

However, important as this is to us, we are keen to also look to the future and to analyse what excellence in ministry could look like in Leigh Park, supported by appropriate funding and properly resourced. To that end we would like first to set out a summary of the main provisions of the current draft proposals and address some of the implications of that:-

Summary of Main Provisions of Draft Proposals

These draft proposals provide for:

- *The termination of the plurality established for the benefice of St Francis, Leigh Park and the benefice of St Clare, Warren Park;*
- *The benefice of St Francis, Leigh Park, the benefice of St Clare, Warren Park and the benefice of West Leigh, St Alban and their constituent parishes to be united;*
- *The establishment of a team ministry for the new benefice of Leigh Park, Warren Park and West Leigh;*
- *The cure of souls to be shared by a team rector and one team vicar;*
- *The housing arrangements for the new team;*
- *The future patronage arrangements for the new team*

This is the summary of the formal proposal and constitutes the legal building block for reorganisation in the Diocesan plan. It forms the Scheme – if passed – around which the wider plan for ministry here will be created.

There are three specific implications we wish to reference in relation to this:-

- **There has been considerable confusion regarding an important element of the formal proposal.** The proposal is for a team ministry across the three parishes, led by a team rector assisted by a team vicar. The nature of the team vicar post has not been specified in the formal proposal, which may possibly be as a requirement of the Measure. However, via the press, social media and formal letters sent to people who expressed an informal interest during the public consultation phase, the Diocese has consistently described the team vicar role as being that of a “church planting” team vicar.

When questions have been raised about this, it has been explained by a member of Bishop's Council that “church planting” team vicar is just one possibility – an example, if you like. However, it has been explained by the Diocese as describing the “direction of travel” and preparing the parishes for the likely outcome. Jenny Hollingsworth has said on numerous occasions that it would have been unfair to the parishes not to phrase it in this way, because otherwise PCCs might suppose that two traditional parish priest roles were likely to be created, which was not the case.

It is our contention that –

- a) A team is a hierarchical device to provide an authority structure within the parishes, but one which neither meets the needs of the community, responds to the authentically expressed voice of the community or allows for creative, dynamic, rooted or flexible missional development.
- b) The “team vicar” and “church planting team vicar” complication is an unhelpful use of the process, which at best demonstrates a confused approach to communication and consultation and at worst suggests a pre-disposition by the Diocese to one particular option.

c) A team comprising a team rector and a church-planting team vicar does not meet the need of our communities, who have spoken volubly during the consultation of their support for the leadership of the current incumbents and the value they place on the style of ministry provided by those incumbents. This is a ministry for all people, in all places, at all times and its worth and impact across the estates has been evidenced by the testimony of hundreds of people who have responded to the public consultation. It is not the ministry that would be provided by a church planting minister.

d) Under the Havant Deanery Plan the three parishes have a combined allocation of 3. It has been suggested by the Diocesan team that this would not change, but the third member of the team is not included in the proposal. It is inappropriate and unstrategic to leave the parishes in this state of uncertainty pending the planning decisions of a post-Scheme team which would neither include the present incumbents nor enough ministers working in traditional ministry roles to cover the mission field. This would hinder mission on the estates both in the short and long term.

- **A further complication arises in Note 8 appended to the Proposal document.** This states:-
8. *As in the previous note, if a benefice is altered by pastoral reorganisation so that it ceases to exist, any clergy holding any offices in relation to that benefice are dispossessed as a result. If following the consultation process, these draft proposals were to be made a Scheme, it is intended that an open and transparent recruitment process would be undertaken for all possible offices. Clergy who currently hold offices that would be affected by these draft proposals would be welcome to apply for any of the possible offices.*

Asked about the position of the current incumbents in the process a Portsmouth Diocesan spokesman was quoted in The News as saying that “*anyone would be able to apply*”¹ for the new roles created if the proposals are accepted

The implications of this are clear – should the current incumbents of the benefices in question wish to continue to work within these communities they will be required to apply for a post in the new benefice alongside all other applicants following an advertised recruitment process.

It is our contention that –

- a) Causing the current incumbents to apply for posts in an open recruitment process is not a requirement of the legislation, which specifically allows for posts to be designated under a Scheme
- b) A pre-determined intention not to consider the designation of posts is a fettering of discretion which requires challenge.
- c) In the case of these estates, the evidenced skill and impact of the ministry of the current incumbents together with the openly expressed views of the community during public consultation mean that this discretion should be considered and exercised, and posts should be designated.
- d) Forming a Scheme under the current proposal and then deciding “*the kind of people we are looking for*”¹ is insulting to the current clergy and a direct failure by the team to listen to the outcome of the public consultation.

- **It is the intention of the Diocesan team to pass the proposal and create the Scheme and then appoint to the posts ahead of any discussion about the wider plan or the funding implications.** The Diocesan spokesman speaking in The News was further quoted as saying “*if these proposals are ultimately approved, then discussions will take place about the scope of each new post, and then we’ll have a better idea of the kind of people we are looking for.*”¹

It is clear from our meetings with the team and comments made by both Archdeacon Gavin and Simon Whitbread that the intention is to begin investigations about what may be workable and missional on the estates after the Scheme is created.

It is our contention that –

- a) Whilst this might be strategically sound in a parish in vacancy or one where there is little community engagement it makes no sense in the current situation. Our PCCs and incumbents are experienced and immersed in the communities, as demonstrated by the work that already happens and the response of the wider community to these proposals. We are therefore extremely well placed to work with the Diocese now to develop the broader plan, in the context of our parish vision and the organic and holistic pattern of mission and engagement which we have already created across the area.
- b) Forming a Scheme under the current proposal and then deciding “*the kind of people we are looking for*”¹ in these circumstances represents a confused approach by the Diocese to its duty to “*make or assist in making better provision for the cure of souls*”² here because it is not in the best interest of mission across the estates. Indeed, the failure to embrace or show any significant impact of the public consultation represents a real reputational risk to the church, but beyond that this strategy will also create a hiatus and damage existing relationships and initiatives.

¹ Diocesan spokesman The News: Wednesday 13th February 2019

² The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 S.3 (3)(a)

APTER 4

THE MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011 AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Under S1 of the Measure it is “the duty of any person or body carrying out functions under [the] Measure to have due regard to the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England.” This imperative applies to us all and as a PCC we are very aware of the requirement upon us to be pastorally, evangelistically, socially and ecumenically¹ minded in our work as the church on this estate.

We are not experts in the legislation. Indeed, until we found ourselves in the current process we were not familiar with it at all. We have, by necessity, learned more over the last few months however and we would like to raise the following points for Bishop’s Council to hold in the balance while considering the future of ministry in Leigh Park and the proposals before them:-

- The Measure, as amended by the Mission and Pastoral etc. (Amendment) Measure 2018, specifically allows for clergy to be dispossessed of their posts in pastoral reorganisation. It was always possible for this to happen, but the Amendment Measure changed the rules relating to compensation and therefore made actual dispossession a feasible reality.

The Measure does not, however, encourage the strategic or widespread actual dispossession of clergy posts. It is true that it does not expressly prohibit it, but that is not generally the nature of legislation. We would urge members of Bishop’s Council to consider the spirit of the legislation as evidenced in the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Recommended Practice Volume 1:-

Chapter 3.17

The following are examples of situations which give rise to the need for advance preparations by the DMPC secretary in liaison with the archdeacon:

- *Dispossession of office holders*

*Many schemes have the effect of dissolving existing benefices when creating new ones by union or other rearrangement. Where this occurs existing clergy offices (or those held by licensed lay workers) cease to exist. **In most cases the office holders will be appointed by the scheme to an ecclesiastical office with equivalent or higher emoluments, but if they are not they become dispossessed (and entitled to compensation for loss of office).***

Chapter 4.12

The vast majority of dispossessions resulting from pastoral reorganisation schemes will be “technical dispossessions” as it will usually be intended to appoint the person(s) concerned to comparable offices in the new benefices created by the reorganisation as a consequential provision of the scheme and they will therefore not be entitled to compensation. However, amendment of their licenses or statements of particulars to take account of their different responsibilities may be necessary.

Chapter 4.13

*The consent of anyone who would be dispossessed (“technically or otherwise) is not required to the scheme, but it is desirable that the bishop or his representative should contact him or her at an early stage to explain the consequences of the scheme. **It is rare for dispossessions giving rise to compensation to arise but where it is unavoidable, detailed advice on the payment of compensation is provided in Appendix 1.6.***

Furthermore, the presentation slides from the Church Commissioners’ 2018 conferences on the amendments to the Measure (available on the Church of England website) state: –

Why the change?

- *Lack of use of current provisions*

- *Cost (are these two bullet points perchance linked...?)*
- *Both of which have sometimes resulted in unviable or undesirable pastoral arrangements continuing.*
- *We can add a new clause to schemes that names all assistant curates so they “transfer” seamlessly to the new benefice(s).*
- *No need to resign to bring schemes into effect, and so the compensation provisions would not apply to them.*
- *In most cases our much-loved “6 month delay” clause is no longer required; schemes can be brought into effect more quickly.*
- *However, if a dispossession really is happening, the 6 month delay clause must be used as it is under the old system.*

It is our contention that –

- Although the 2011 Measure allows for actual dispossessions to occur, the supporting documentation suggests that the context for this is unusual or “rare”. We therefore urge Bishop’s Council to consider the implications of creating a bank of four schemes across the Diocese which has the effect of actually dispossessing as many as 10 stipendiary clergy of their posts.
 - In relation to our own circumstances, the highlighted sections of the Code of Practice should be given due weight. It is clear that the expectation behind the Measure is that ***“the vast majority of dispossessions resulting from pastoral reorganisation schemes will be “technical dispossessions” as it will usually be intended to appoint the person(s) concerned to comparable offices in the new benefices created by the reorganisation as a consequential provision of the scheme”*** and that only where current pastoral arrangements are ***unviable or undesirable*** should actual dispossession occur, triggering the new compensation provisions. The current pastoral arrangements are neither unviable – forming, as they do, a budgeted part of the Deanery Plan – nor undesirable. We have already evidenced the desirability of the work, impact and commitment of the current incumbents in the existing pastoral roles. Furthermore, although we cannot speak for Karina in West Leigh, we are aware that Jonathan has never been approached by the Diocese for discussions in these terms. We therefore believe that the current proposal which has the effect of actually dispossessing him of his post is an inappropriate use of the Measure.
- The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Recommended Practice Volume 1 also contains, at Chapter 2.13 a precis of the Gaulby Judgement. We have heard it argued by several participants in the process, particularly from the Diocese team, that in engaging in pastoral reorganisation it is unhelpful to take into account the current incumbents and that it is not appropriate to engage in strategic planning that has personal factors at its heart. The review of the Gaulby judgement as contained in the Code of Practice says the following:-

The following points emerge from the judgement:

The need to have regard to the traditions, needs and characteristics of individual parishes in a proposed pastoral reorganisation can include consideration of ‘interpersonal factors’;

Such consideration can include the relationships between parishes, between parishioners, or between clergy as well as the ability of particular incumbents to contribute to the better cure of souls;

The organisation of the diocese into parishes is for the ease and benefit of the people and not the incumbent.

A closer study of the case itself reinforces this. The Rev Cheeseman had argued that a pastoral reorganisation scheme’s justification ***“must wholly exclude any reference to or consideration of who are the incumbents of the benefices affected.”***² In a majority judgement the Lords addressed this by saying:-

"It can also be seen that the exclusion would often give rise to difficulties in practice. Some arrangements of parishes, particularly in these days of benefices including a number of parishes or former parishes and the use of teams, inevitably create situations which may or may not be satisfactory from a pastoral point of view depending upon the gifts of the persons from time to time involved. Incumbents of exceptional gifts may be able to make certain combinations of parishes work when less gifted persons cannot. To exclude all consideration of the contributions to the successful cure of souls in the diocese that the incumbents of the benefices affected could make would be to adopt an artificiality which finds no support in the drafting of the legislation and would obstruct its purpose. Further, if the actual position is to be disregarded, what is the assumption which the Bishop and the Commissioners are required to make? Are they to postulate some "average" incumbent and then make their assessment on that basis disregarding the fact that the present incumbents do not and no incumbent is ever likely to equate to that average? This point has only to be stated in order to see that the argument cannot be sustained."

It is our contention that –

- a) Although this case refers to previous legislation it remains persuasive legal argument as evidenced by its inclusion in the March 2019 Code of Practice.
- b) It gives a clear guide that the gifts and skills of the existing incumbents with regard to the furtherance of mission and their ability to contribute to the better cure of souls should be taken into account when considering and creating a pastoral reorganisation scheme
- c) In putting together the current proposal, which has been described by the Diocesan team as taking an opportunity to "do ministry differently" in Leigh Park, no consideration has been taken of these factors. Indeed, it has been suggested to the PCC that to take Jonathan and Karina into account would be wrong and that the support they have received from the wider community constitutes the cult of personality. We believe that this is a wrong and damaging assertion both pastorally and in law.

¹ Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 S3 and S106

² Cheeseman v Church Commissioners – Privy Council 1999

CHAPTER 5

THE WAY FORWARD – OUR POSITION AND OUR COUNTER-PROPOSAL

We have considered all of this in great detail because we are passionate about these estates and about our contribution to that work of mission for which we are all responsible. We are positive and excited by the possibilities for ministry here. This chapter of our submission broadly reflects the presentation made by the PCC to Bishop's Council members at our meeting on 14th March 2019 and a copy of that presentation can be found at Appendix 2. We would be happy to talk with you in more detail about our counter proposal or to engage in mediation as set out in Chapter 2.44 of the 2011 Measure Code of Practice if that would be considered helpful by Bishop's Council. We ask that you please read this Chapter in the context of all that we have said in the previous chapters.

St Francis and St Clare PCCs have worked together with the leadership of one vicar for many years and so, in this process, we have met together and discussed the way forward; we have prayed about it; we have asked questions of the Diocese, of ourselves and of each other. We have offered and encouraged meetings with St Alban's PCC.

Our prayers have led us back to our vision, created last spring and shared with you in Chapter 1. It is a dynamic vision. It is missional in focus and provides a creative framework for strategic development. It is authentic to these places, to what we, in Leigh Park and Warren Park, believe about mission and ministry, and to the Gospel.

In the context of pastoral reorganisation, we find we must be true to this vision and must seek to find a way forward that creates the best opportunity for it to become reality. For the reasons we have highlighted in Chapter 3 above we cannot agree to a legal scheme without a much clearer picture of the plan that will be scaffolded on to it. To proceed in any other way will be to create a vision vacuum which will entirely ignore the prayerful and innovative vision we have already begun to work towards.

Alongside all of this and everything we have raised in the preceding Chapters of our response we have, of course, noted that the Diocese undertook a significant piece of community consultation across the estates during the public consultation phase of the process. The Diocese launched the community consultation at that very well attended public meeting and advertised it widely through positive endorsements from senior clergy in the local press.

It is unlikely that any of us will have the resources to create a better opportunity for garnering information about what the people of these estates think, or to hear the voice of this community, in the near future. By any standards the response would be considered significant. For a community notoriously disengaged from formal authority structures and said by the Diocese to be uncommitted to the church, it might be considered extraordinary. People responded energetically to the consultation and engaged with the issue that they felt mattered to them. The weight of their responses contributed to Bishop's Council delaying its response by eight weeks.

We are aware of the general thrust of the feedback gathered during this process. This seemed unanimously to support retaining posts for the existing clergy, affirming their leadership and endorsing a model built around their existing outreach and ministry.

We have also made enquiry of the Diocese and received the following reply to questions raised:-

Question 7: Please clarify your general understanding of the public view expressed during the informal consultation period and the strength of that view.

Answer: My understanding of the public view is that there is a varied response as to whether additional resource would be welcomed. Some have said that they do not want it and others have said it would be good. There has been strong support for both Jonathan and Karina to remain in their current roles.

Question 8: Please explain the ways in which the feedback submitted by the public during the informal consultation has caused changes to the proposal.

Answer: (a) All of the above PCCs agreed that less administrative burden and duplication of administration across the three parishes would be welcomed;

(b) All of the PCCs agreed that they would be happy to work more closely together;

(c) There was concern about the Petersfield Road separating West Leigh from Leigh Park and Warren Park and concern over patterns of worship and so each parish wished to retain its parish church.

(d) The structure of a team ministry was suggested.

We think that, alongside our own vision for these estates – indeed, because of that vision – it is important to take account of the voice of these communities.

It is our contention that, for all the reasons we have previously outlined, the existing proposal meets neither of these imperatives and we oppose it on this basis.

We do not feel that the Diocese has fully heard or reflected on our understanding of these communities, our engagement, our ability to reach the hard to reach, our versatility, our creativity, our inclusivity, our prayerful impact or our wide and generous enthusiasm for embracing innovative forms of ministry. We also do not feel that any appropriate account has been taken of the impact in mission and leadership of the incumbent, Rev Jonathan Jeffery and his evidenced abilities in relation to pastoral encounter, community engagement, teaching and encouragement – in short the furtherance of mission and the cure of souls. We feel that he and Karina have been overlooked and underestimated in this process and in the proposals, as a matter of strategic policy which is unhelpful and damaging to mission outcomes.

We acknowledge that our Sunday attendance figures are not high, but we refer you again to Chapter 1 above and the snapshot of data and projects from 2018. We shouldn't need to justify ourselves in this process and it is a measure of its damaging nature that we feel we must. In this context however we must impress upon Bishop's Council that we are currently shackled by a lack of resources and a lack of support which have exhausted and overstretched us, but we are not shackled by brittleness or inflexibility or inward-focussed self-preservation.

We feel that the formal proposal, together with the indicated "direction of travel", reflects neither the breadth of our vision nor the depth of the public response to the informal consultation. At first the proposal sounds cutting edge and change-driven, but on closer inspection it is static and bounded by a traditional authority structure and a culture which labels and defines when we should be embracing and co-working. We do not use our counter proposal simply to maintain the status quo. We are not afraid of change, but we think that what creates fabulousness is people and communities being encouraged to develop, evolve and innovate from a firm foundation. This is the language of our thinking.

Whilst we care about our buildings, we care much more about what they represent than what they are. We want to blend the flexibility brought by recognising our distinctiveness with the unifying nature of co-governance; we want to embrace and celebrate everything that is creative, generous and wise about our "now" offer, by recognising, developing and enhancing its deep networked impact across our communities and we want to blend that with alternative forms of ministry which bring new and dynamic energy; we want to offer sacred space that speaks of otherness and sacred space that speaks into the heart of today and tomorrow; we want to work collaboratively with others with whom we share common core values in an atmosphere of mutual respect and open dialogue.

These estates are loved and known through the ministry of the church here, and the church and the Good News of Jesus, are loved and known in return. We know this soil and in organising for the future here the Diocese should not act as if starting from scratch, but from this place of organic strength – which brings with it its own gently powerful meaning of love and mission.

We believe that, with the people of St Alban's and alongside the skilled leadership of the current incumbents, we can offer that firm foundation on which to build and a unique and meaningful insight into what will contribute to the better care of souls across the estates. Like the wise man, we have dug deeply and laid that foundation on rock (Luke 6: 46-49) and we continue to do this as we seek to build up and out. We are longing for the opportunity to combine all that we are with all that the Diocese can offer here to create a visionary model for estates ministry in this place.

Our passion for the Gospel and for these estates demands nothing less.

In short, our love for God and for our community, together with the voice of that community and our ambition for ministry here push at the boundaries of the current proposal and find it wanting.

We therefore put forward an alternative for these parishes:-

1. That St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park become one parish
2. That the parish of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park create a formal group under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 with the parish of St Alban, West Leigh governed by a joint council (under impending legislation)
3. That the post of incumbent of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park be designated to the existing incumbent of those parishes
4. That the incumbency of St Albans parish remain
5. That the third post granted to the estates (proposed group) under the Havant Deanery Plan, and previously held by the PO9 Pioneers, be held by a Church Planting Minister with responsibility for three simultaneous church plants at venues across the group
(Example venues - H & W Football Club, West Leigh; The Hub, Leigh Park; St Clare's Church, Warren Park)

Points 1 – 5 form the legal proposal

6. SDF bid to include funding for a Business Manager to be accountable to the incumbents and to the joint council and responsible for all matters of administrative compliance
7. SDF bid to also include funding for a community pioneer with responsibility for managing a CAP debt centre and developing the food poverty project drawing clients from across the group
8. Incumbents to work with the Business Manager on buildings projects in relation to community space and hall development at St Francis and St Clare and church building issues at St Albans
9. Significant social enterprise initiatives developed
10. Group to work as a co-sharing and cohesive collaborative whole serving its distinct communities and its vision and mission imperatives by the grace of God, the joy of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

Points 6 – form our suggested plan for wider missional development

We believe that this plan, incorporating at points 1 – 5 a legal framework proposal, is strategically sound and missionally exciting.

It provides a well constructed framework for drawing people into “the adventure of discipleship”¹ and is complimentary to the House of Bishop's Statement on Church Planting (June 2018) and the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission².

It is flexible, builds on firm foundations, uses the existing clergy who can remain as valued and trusted leaders on these estates, gives an equal voice and standing to all three established churches, echoes the feedback gathered during public consultation, increases capacity and allows for dynamic development and innovation.

Furthermore, it is a plan which is rooted in community and authentic to our voice and in this regard it is the embodiment of the recent General Synod motion:-

That this Synod, committed to the Church of England's vocation to be a Christian presence in every community, and noting the historic marginalisation of social housing estates in the policies of both church and nation:

- a) commend the vision of the Estates Evangelism Task Group to see a serving, loving and worshipping Christian community on every significant social housing estate in the country;*
- b) urge every diocese to build ministry and mission on estates into its mission strategies, clergy deployment plans and SDF funding bids; and*
- c) give thanks for the Christian leadership offered by people from estate communities and calls upon the Archbishops' Council, the Church Commissioners and the NCIs, through their work under the Renewal and Reform programme, to enable the voices of people from estates and other marginalised communities to be heard and heeded in the life of the Church of England.*

The plan we propose is true to our vision in Leigh Park and Warren Park and authentic to the community narrative which has been heard so loudly through the public consultation and which we know and understand through our experience and knowledge of these estates.

It creates a singular opportunity for new ministry initiatives in the context of a trusted leadership, which is imaginative, passionate and courageous in its aspiration for ministry here.

It utilises the best resources of these parishes in the now, and for the future, building on what is already fabulous and facilitating ever broader and deeper engagement.

We commend it to you.

St Francis Church,
Riders Lane,
Leigh Park

March 2019

¹ House of Bishop's Statement on Church Planting (June 2018)

² The Five Marks of Mission are: To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom; To teach, baptise and nurture new believers; To respond to human need by loving service; To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation; To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

(Bonds of Affection- 1984 ACC-6 p49, Mission in a Broken World-1990 ACC-8 p101)

Appendix 1
OUR SHARED VISION

OUR SHARED VISION
We will share
the Good News that people are
made by God, known by God
and loved by God –
transforming the way they think about themselves,
others, their community,
the world around them
and God.

1. SPIRITUALITY

We will provide holistic and seamless opportunity for reflection on the mysteries of the world and our part in them and so encourage spiritual maturity and a developing understanding of the fullness of life.

4. SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

We will stand in solidarity with our neighbours as we face life's challenges together.

3. CREATIVE USE OF OUR SACRED SPACE

We will create space for encounter with each other and with God.

2. WORSHIP

We will create authentic worship which is true to our aim and communicates it
- peaceful, embracing, encouraging, joyful, meaningful, making connections; holding its integrity; true to the people we serve and to God.

5. COMMUNITY COHESION

We will work with, alongside and for our neighbours and community partners to create a community of nurture, learning and opportunity where all can flourish and grow.

Heart of the Park
St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park

Appendix 2

ST FRANCIS PCC COUNTER-PROPOSAL

1. That St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park become one parish
2. That the parish of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park create a formal group under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 with the parish of St Alban, West Leigh governed by a joint council (under impending legislation)
3. That the post of incumbent of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park be designated to the existing incumbent of those parishes
4. That the incumbency of St Albans parish remain
5. That the third post granted to the estates (proposed group) under the Havant Deanery Plan, and previously held by the PO9 Pioneers, be held by a Church Planting Minister with responsibility for three simultaneous church plants at venues across the group
(Example venues - H & W Football Club, West Leigh; The Hub, Leigh Park; St Clare's Church, Warren Park)

Points 1 – 5 form the legal proposal

6. SDF bid to include funding for a Business Manager to be accountable to the incumbents and to the joint council and responsible for all matters of administrative compliance
7. SDF bid to also include funding for a community pioneer with responsibility for managing a CAP debt centre and developing the food poverty project drawing clients from across the group
8. Incumbents to work with the Business Manager on buildings projects in relation to community space and hall development at St Francis and St Clare and church building issues at St Albans
9. Significant social enterprise initiatives developed
10. Group to work as a co-sharing and cohesive collaborative whole serving its distinct communities and its vision and mission imperatives by the grace of God, the joy of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

Points 6 – form our suggested plan for wider missional development

Appendix 3

EXTRACT FROM PRAYER SPACES IN SCHOOLS FEEDBACK 2018

PLEASE NOTE: we would not ordinarily share these comments outside the Prayer Space environment because they are intensely personal responses and it is not generally appropriate to use them for other purposes. We feel strongly about this, but consider it is necessary here in order to properly communicate the powerful impact we are committed to. Please treat what you read here with appropriate respect and consideration, and please do not share it outside of the context of this document under any circumstances

The Check-Out

Write a Comment or Something You would Like to Say About the Prayer Space

Some examples, written by the children as they left at the end of their session

I wish you were here to support my nan
It was really calm and peaceful. Amazing
It was great and I could let go
Amazing! I feel good
I wish I could have 20 more minutes
I had the best time ever
I loved every second
It was calm and relaxing. I wish I could stay for a bit longer
I liked that it was enjoyable and relaxing. Thank you Father Jonathan
This really helped me!
I liked it because it has calmed me down
It was great. I hope you do it again
It's very calming if you're angry x
Gives me time to think
I felt calm and forgiven
I am happy so much because I really enjoyed it
It was awesome
Peaceful and good
I wish I could bring my Grandad back
I will remember this because it is to do with God
I have had a good time here can I come back soon?
It was the most relaxing thing in my life. I loved it
Beautiful. One of the best things I have ever done
It refreshed my mind
Brilliant
I loved it, it gave me memories of [name] who died
Hope
Wow
It reminded me of my dad
It was calm and I loved it
Hopeful, relaxing, calm, warm
Super
It was magical
It washed away my thoughts
So peaceful
Great place
Awesome
I love it here
It made me love the world
Peace and harmony
I love how you give us time to relax and give love and respect towards anyone
I pray for happiness. Amen
Thank you so much
It is calming and lovely
Thank you to all the helpers from St Francis for creating such a beautiful space for us (Year 5 pupil)
Thank you God for the world
It's relaxing and stress relieving
The prayer space released all my negative emotions

[Pupil's name] was here and loved it!
I thought it was good because you could think of others in the world
I thought it was a peaceful place where I could clear my mind
It was nice to talk about the bad things and forget them
I really enjoyed the prayer space. The times of saying sorry and activities are enjoyable...favourite place
It was relaxing and a good way to think
It was so lovely
I really loved to spend time in here to say prayers and everything
It was really nice to let my bad things out
The Prayer Space...helped us let go of our insecurities
I really feel relaxed here and doing each activity helped me connect with God
It was really peaceful and helped me think
Cool
I feel happy now because I let go of my sad[dness] and I starting fresh
I would love to come again. I feel calm and relaxed
I now feel relaxed, calm and safe because it was just so beautiful
Thank you Father Jonathan
I feel comfortable with life again
It was like nothing you have seen. Cool but sad
I feel – to remember things in the past – relaxed, a calm
I'm feeling very relaxed and clam because I had some worries and I was allowed to share them in a quiet space to God
The room was special
I was happy in the beautiful room
When I came in I let go of my worries
All my anger went
Thank you God
I like the modelling. It allowed me to think about things
It felt like a safe place to be. Soothing
I feel a lot better now because I worry about my [close family member] sometimes
It is a good place to be, God
It has been amazing in here
I'm glad that I said all my worries and thank yous and I'm feeling a load more better now that I've said it
I thought the peace was amazing
I feel fine now and it was great to be here
Thank you for letting us come
This is the best time ever
It helps me
I pray to God
This made me realise that life is more than just the world
Thanks for taking time
I am a calmer person. Hope it stays like that
I don't feel as worried anymore
Always believe in God
Best place in the school
Peace be with you
I feel much more refreshed and better than before
It was peaceful and a place to let go of negativity
It helped me think about my worries. Thank you
I had the chance to say sorry and to say thank you to God. I was able to calm myself and stop all the problems in my head. I could appreciate what I have
I am so happy
I felt safe
I like the star lights
I like saying thank you to God
A beautiful, relaxing and calming space where adults and children can be one with their thoughts and escape
I felt happy seeing the children so relaxed and engaged
Thank you for a lovely couple of days, everyone was so positive about it