

**Church Commissioners**

**Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee**

**Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011**

**Benefices of Barton; Carisbrooke; St Nicholas in the Castle,  
Carisbrooke; Gatcombe; Newport; and Newport St John  
(Diocese of Portsmouth)**

**Note by Rex Andrew**

**Summary**

- (i) Following publication of the draft Pastoral Scheme providing for:
- terminating the plurality established for the benefices of Carisbrooke; St Nicholas in the Castle, Carisbrooke; and Gatcombe;
  - uniting the five benefices and parishes of Barton; Carisbrooke; St Nicholas in the Castle, Carisbrooke; Newport St John; and Newport and establishing a team ministry for the area of the new benefice of Newport Minster, St John, Carisbrooke and Barton;
  - the cure of souls in the new benefice to be shared by a team rector and two team vicars; their housing arrangements and the patronage arrangements for the new benefice; and
  - the new benefice to be held in plurality with the benefice of Gatcombe, and for the team ministry to extend to the latter benefice

we received 74 representations about the draft Scheme, of which 69 were against (including 65 from members of St Paul's, Barton), four in favour together with one from Carisbrooke (St Mary) PCC saying it is broadly favour but with some concerns.

- (ii) The representations against the draft Scheme can be split into two broad groups, those from the Incumbent and PCC of Newport (Minster) and those from the PCC and members of the congregation of Barton St Paul:
- a. The former express concern that the proposals are not solely concerned with the cure of souls as they also relate to the Diocese's application for Strategic Development Funding, which should not be a consideration. They also have concerns about the consultation process; reliance on flawed evidence; the restoration

and mission of Newport Minster being detrimentally affected; the differing traditions of the various churches not being given sufficient weight or catered for; a team ministry structure being favoured without adequate exploration of other options, particularly a group ministry; disregard of the Code of Practice and the Gaulby judgement in dispossessing the current clergy from office; and a lack of mediation.

- b. The latter, in relation to Barton, outline local feeling as one of being treated badly for some years by the Diocese, during a prolonged interregnum, and concerns that their distinct evangelical theological convictions would not be adequately protected in the proposed arrangements; that their funds could be applied to other churches; and that it would be difficult to attract clergy who would be acceptable to them.
- (iii) The representors in favour see the Bishop's proposals, reached after extensive consultations, as much needed structural changes promoting growth in the mission of the local Church in the Newport area.
  - (iv) In response to the representations, the Bishop of Portsmouth explains that the proposals are part of the Diocesan strategy for resourcing churches in significant areas in the Diocese where congregations are static or declining. He says attendance in these parishes has been declining significantly faster than in most other areas of the Diocese, and that the parishes do not cover their ministry costs. His aim is to create the right structures and to resource these with the appropriate staffing to enable the delivery of mission in a way which combines traditional and new forms of ministry but says that there was no pre-judgement in favour of a team ministry. He says that this may require clergy with different skills and while, for reasons of fairness all current clergy would be dispossessed, they welcome to apply for the new posts. He regards this approach as being compatible with the advice in the Code of Practice and also not to be in conflict with the principles of the Gaulby Judgement.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to consider the representations and the issues set out in this paper.

## **Introduction**

1. The Committee is invited to consider the 74 representations made in respect of the draft Scheme, being 69 against (of including 65 from members of St Paul's, Barton) and four in favour, with Carisbrooke PCC saying it is broadly in favour while raising some concerns.
2. Attached are:
  - Annex A: A copy of the draft Pastoral Scheme;
  - Annex B: Parish information forms for the six parishes;
  - Annex C: A scaled map of the area;
  - Annex D: Crockford printouts for the six benefices, showing their current clergy;
  - Annex E: Extract from the Code of Practice to the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 on dispossession of clergy;
  - Annex F: Extract from the Code of Practice on the Gaulby Judgement (relating to a pastoral reorganisation in the Diocese of Leicester);
  - Annex G: Copies of the representations;
  - Annex H: A copy of the letter referring the representations to the Bishop of Portsmouth together with a copy of his reply;
  - Annex I: The Bishop's explanation of Diocesan Strategy;
  - Annex J: Copies of the further comments received from representors regarding the draft Scheme; and
  - Annex K: Unredacted representations (circulated to the Committee only).

## **Background**

3. This draft Scheme is one of four which have been brought forward by the Bishop and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) with the aim of strategically resourcing churches for growth, to build on the perceived success of a Pioneer Project in 2016 and other initiatives which have seen a small increase in average weekly church attendance. Two of the other draft Schemes (for St John, Forton, Christ Church, Gosport and Holy Trinity, Gosport; and Leigh Park, Warren Park and West Leigh in Havant) have also attracted adverse representations, which will be considered at this meeting. There were no representations against the fourth draft Scheme, relating to the benefices of Bridgemary, Rowner and

Elson and it could now be made, although the Bishop has asked that it should not be until a decision has been made on the other three cases at this meeting.

4. The Bishop has explained his and the DMPC's strategic thinking which underpins all four draft schemes in common terms in his responses to all three representation cases and this is attached as **Annex I**. The Diocese has also submitted a bid for Strategic Development Funding encompassing the areas covered by all four draft schemes.
5. As regards this draft Scheme, a plurality was established for the two Carisbrooke benefices and Gatcombe in 2014, and the Reverend Marcus Bagg has been the incumbent since 2014. Canon Kevin Arkell has been the Newport (Minster) benefice's incumbent since 2018, having previously been incumbent of the Newport St John benefice from 2011 to 2017. The Reverend Allie Kerr has been the Newport St John benefice's priest-in-charge since 2017, and also the rural dean since that time, but is about to leave to take up another appointment within the Diocese. The Reverend Janet Hallam has been an NSM in the Newport (Minster) benefice since 2008 and is a Hospital Chaplain for the Isle of Wight. All would be dispossessed from their current offices by the draft Scheme.
6. The draft Scheme as published by the Commissioners included the following diocesan rationale (provided by the Bishop on the advice of his DMPC):-

*"The proposed union of benefices and parishes is necessary to free up people and finances, as well as decrease the burden of administration and buildings, from maintaining a declining/static church and to support cohesive working across the whole area of Newport and Carisbrooke. The benefice of Gatcombe will be held in plurality with the proposed new benefice whilst its longer-term future is determined."*

and these footnotes in relation to the future clergy provision if the Scheme proceeds and the effect on current office holders:

*"Dispossession of the clergy*

8. *As a result of the proposed union of the affected benefices and parishes provided for in clause 2, the existing benefices and parishes would cease to exist and the clergy licensed to them would be dispossessed from their current posts should the Scheme take effect. As they are not being appointed to new offices by the draft Scheme the affected clergy would be entitled to 12 months of their current stipend and pension contributions as a lump sum, and to be housed in suitable accommodation for the same 12 month-period (or, by agreement with the diocese, to receive payment in lieu of any such occupation).*

Appointments in the proposed new benefice

9. *Should the draft Scheme come into effect the Bishop intends that appointments to all the possible offices in the new benefice would be by an open and transparent process. All the office-holders who would be dispossessed from the current benefices would be welcome to apply for any of these posts."*

**Summary of the representations against the draft Scheme**

7. *Newport (Minster) PCC and Canon Arkell, incumbent of that benefice, strongly object to the draft Scheme and share many of their concerns.*
8. The PCC says its primary grounds for objecting are:
- (i) the proposals are not solely concerned with the cure of souls;
  - (ii) the evidence base for them is flawed;
  - (iii) the proposals put at risk the restoration and mission of Newport Minster; and
  - (iv) it is not clear from the proposed Scheme and consultations how the practicalities of maintaining the different traditions of the churches will be addressed.
9. Canon Arkell has six main concerns:
- (i) the proposals for reorganisation were prejudged in favour of a team ministry;
  - (ii) the Gaulby judgement, set out in Paragraph 2.13 of the Code of Practice, has been disregarded;
  - (iii) the advice regarding dispossession of clergy in paragraph 4.12 of the Code has not been followed;
  - (iv) the proposals are illogical and irrational in that they contradict the recommendations in the Bishop's Review of Newport Minster and are likely to harm ministry and waste Commissioners' funding;
  - (v) there has been no mediation to resolve differing responses to the consultations; and
  - (vi) the Diocese has shown bad faith in respect of the churches in Newport.
10. Both the PCC and Canon Arkell say the proposed reorganisation is not being considered solely in relation to the better cure of souls, as required by the Mission and Pastoral Measure. They say that presenting it alongside a bid for Strategic Development Funding from the Commissioners is confusing, as securing funding is not a purpose of pastoral reorganisation and reorganisation is not a requirement for receiving funding. They say this is an example of bad faith.
11. They say that the evidence base for the proposals is flawed. The PCC feels that the Diocese has relied on Church Commissioners' statistics without understanding the context. It says the 22% decline in Newport

Minster's congregation over 12 years should be considered in the light of local demographics and that its Sunday morning congregation numbers are now growing, while the average age is substantially lower than ten years ago. It and Canon Arkell refer to other signs of growth: a candidate exploring a vocation in priesthood, an increase in active lay ministry and growth in weekday ministry, new strands of worship from their Gospel choir and coffee shop, and an increase in visitors and the Christmas congregation. They also point out that the Isle of Wight has a high number of competing churches.

12. They say that the Minster is already fully engaged with works that a 'pioneer minister' is expected to do, including a food bank, debt counselling and a good neighbour scheme, and participates fully in Newport Churches Together as a common agent for social outreach and evangelism, allowing each partner church to focus upon its strengths and gain support from the others. The PCC also says that it has instigated two daily acts of worship, often led by laity, and also other mission initiatives including the establishment of a growing social media presence that reaches a younger audience and has directly resulted in attendance at services and events.
13. Canon Arkell and the PCC provide a copy of the Bishop's Review of Newport Minster from 2016 and give details of the steps they have taken to implement its recommendations. The PCC says it has actively reduced its accumulated financial shortfall, has already raised a substantial amount towards the initial restoration of the Minster, and has also secured additional funding of £1m for the actual restoration and internal reordering of the building. This in turn allows their bidding for the same again from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The PCC and Canon Arkell both say that the Minster needs stability in the next 18 months to meet its building's goals. They also point out that one of the recommendations of the review was to separate the Minster from St John's, Newport so that it could concentrate on its distinctive role, which is contradictory to the current proposal for a united parish.
14. They have concerns about the way the consultations resulting in these proposals were undertaken, particularly the short notice given for the initial informal meeting, together with its time and location, which were inconvenient, especially for members of the congregation with young families.
15. They say that concerns raised during the consultation, particularly regarding the differing churchmanship of the parishes involved, have not been addressed. They say that the way the issues were presented showed that there had been a pre-judgement in favour of a team ministry and alternatives, particularly a group ministry, which was raised by all the PCCs, were not properly discussed.
16. They say that the Archdeacon of Portsdown acknowledged in her written response that the experience of team ministries across the wider Church

has been mixed, and Canon Arkell says that from his experience their success depends on the extent to which those involved are committed to the concept, and here only two of the parishes favour it. They say that the Bishop should have come to the parishes with a blank piece of paper on proposed ways forward, rather than having a predetermined one.

17. The PCC thinks that telling the clergy at the outset before formal consultations commenced that they would be dispossessed also indicates pre-determination. Canon Arkell says that the proposed dispossessions contradict the advice in the Code of Practice that they should be rare.
18. Both he and the PCC say that there should have been a mediation process, given the different views expressed by the PCCs, and Canon Arkell says that he specifically suggested this.
19. The PCC thinks that the benefit of extra staffing resulting from the proposals has been exaggerated, as the ministry of one Reader will be lost if the draft Scheme goes ahead. It says the Scheme would result in an increase only from 2.8 to 3.0 clergy posts and from 4.2 posts to 5.0 overall, with the two non-clergy posts only funded for five years.
20. The PCC says that the Newport Minster parsonage house which has been designated as the team rector's residence is not fit for purpose and that travelling from it to the Parish Office, which should be a two-minute journey, can take over half an hour due to the road layout.
21. Canon Arkell thinks the proposals will harm the mission of the Church and are likely to waste Church Commissioners' grants. He fears that they would lead to many people leaving their churches and also several long interregnums.
22. *Barton (St Paul) PCC* and many of its congregation in individual representations say that the Bishop's proposals do not reflect God's will for either Newport or St Paul's church family and parish. They say that St Paul's is distinctive in its evangelical theological convictions, and in its position in the Church of England community and on the Island.
23. They say that the benefice has been in interregnum for four and a half years with no priest appointed for temporary pastoral oversight, but has continued to flourish, spiritually as well as numerically. During this time, it has received very little support from the Diocese, and at times has felt that senior clergy did not appear to be acting in its best interest. They say they were highly encouraged last summer by an agreement with its overseeing Archdeacon (of the Meon) and area dean to connect its half-time parish post to a half-time pioneer post covering the town of Newport, for which funding was already available, and think this would have been an excellent way forward with extensive missional opportunities for both St. Paul's and the town.

24. They say this would be lost under the current proposals and that their parish profile makes it clear that the congregation would be unable to work within a team where a team rector or overseeing clergy did not meet the needs or theological convictions of the majority of St Paul's congregation. They are concerned that there would not be sufficient lay involvement in the selection of a team vicar with responsibility for St Paul's. Some also say that the recent appointment of an Archdeacon with very different views to their own on sexuality issues makes it unlikely that any genuinely orthodox evangelical priest would consider taking up a position in Newport, nor even on the Island. They say this would not be in accordance with the idea of "mutual flourishing".
25. They say that for the last four years Barton paid its parish share in full, a total of £96,000, but it is currently withholding share payments and members of the congregation are putting their tithes and offerings aside until the situation is satisfactorily resolved and there is a positive way forward for them as a congregation.
26. They also point out that St Paul's Church would not accept grant funding from any source that had conditions attached, unlike possibly some of the other churches, and are also concerned that funds from St Paul's would be diverted to the restoration project for Newport Minster.
27. They say that the effect of the draft Scheme will detrimentally impact on the likes of Messy Church and other youth and community activities operating out of or through St Paul's. It may drive out of the Church of England many members of the largest and most flourishing Anglican congregation in Newport, which takes the most active part in 'Churches working together in Newport' and has established excellent relations with other non-Anglican congregations in the town. One says that this is particularly so, because he and many in their congregation come originally from a Free Church background.
28. St Paul's congregation members also think that there has been little or no opportunity to discuss the proposals with diocesan representatives other than at the formal consultation meetings. They say St Paul's is not opposed to change, but proper and meaningful consultation is required in the first place, something that has been lacking here; feedback from St Paul's appears to have been not listened to by the Diocese. They also question why pastoral reorganisation is needed to secure the Commissioners' funding.
29. A number are concerned that the proposed union of parishes may eventually lead to the closure of St Paul's. The spouse of a wheelchair user is particularly concerned as St Paul's has easy access and parking and no pews, which enables the congregation to sit together.



## Summary of the representations in support of the draft Scheme

30. *The Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight* says that although only recently licensed and installed, he has been involved in the discussion of these proposals for some time as acting Dean of Portsmouth Cathedral and a member of the Bishop's senior staff team.
31. He strongly supports the proposals, which he says were arrived at after extensive consultations, and believes that the new structure will enable the Church to be more engaged with the communities it serves and thus develop mission and growth. He believes that a single parish team structure will offer a wider range of gifts, skills and opportunities to tackle the needs of the area in a more strategic way, but still allow individual places of worship to flourish. For example, he says that having Newport Minster at the heart of the town will enable it to perform its civic and island-wide role while also benefitting from the support of a wider team from a missional perspective.
32. *The Rev Allie Kerr*, the interim priest-in-charge of St John the Baptist, Newport and Area Dean of the Isle of Wight (and Mission Development Adviser), says she is about to leave to take up a new appointment within the Diocese. She sees the proposals as promoting growth in Newport and says that her moving on will enable a new team, with the necessary gifts and experience, to be recruited. She feels St John's, Newport might have been hindered in accepting the proposals if she remained, through a loyalty to her and desire to protect her post. As it stands, the parish had previously been almost unanimously opposed to the proposals but is now unanimously in favour (subject to some concerns about the makeup of DCCs), as it feels that its concerns have been heard.
33. Mrs Kerr says that radical change to mission and ministry in Newport is needed, as under the current parish structures a large percentage of its residents will never come to the existing services. The draft Scheme will result in the provision of ministers with specialist vocations to release mission to those that the Church currently does not reach. As well as a pioneer minister with a specialism working with children and families, she would like to see an operations manager with responsibility for the fabric of the buildings and associated matters.
34. She says that a special meeting of the Deanery Synod held on March 26<sup>th</sup> passed a motion welcoming the proposed reorganisation of the Newport area while asking that the strengths and weaknesses of a Group rather than a Team Ministry be considered by the Bishop's Council. She notes that a proposed amendment to defer the proposed reorganisation pending a mediation process to find common ground was clearly defeated. She also feels that the issues which may cause some at St Paul's, Barton to leave the Church of England are separate from these proposed structural changes.

35. *Newport St John PCC* confirms its support for the draft Scheme. It accepts the need to redevelop witness to those not yet part of the Christian family, while recognising that there is still much that is unclear as to what its implementation would look like.
36. *Gatcombe PCC* notes that Gatcombe would be held in plurality with the combined other benefices under the Scheme. In offering its support to the proposals it sought formal confirmation that while very much the minor partner in the proposed plurality, Gatcombe PCC would be represented on the new PCC to deal with matters concerning the provision of ministerial resources and pastoral care to the Gatcombe benefice.
37. *Carisbrooke (St Mary) PCC* is broadly in favour of the Bishop's proposals but expresses some significant concerns. It says it has been reassured that the proposals now recognise the existing outer boundaries of the Carisbrooke community and that a range of worshipping styles will be retained, as will the link between the two Carisbrooke churches. It prefers a team to a group ministry, as it believes this is more likely to achieve the stated aims and benefit the whole area. Engaging with neighbouring parishes and cooperation will ensure less duplication.
38. It says that it had initial concerns over an extra layer of councils but is now satisfied that this would not necessarily mean more meetings in total for the new PCC and the DCCs. It feels the latter, which would maintain a sense of identification and make individuals feel empowered, are particularly important for local fundraising. It is however concerned over wasting time getting entangled in protracted wrangles over the detail.
41. The PCC is happy that the three clergy proposed under the team structure would have incumbent status. It asks that St Mary's should have an identifiable priest. It is grateful to the Diocese for altering its earlier boundary proposals but asks that 'Carisbrooke' be included in the name of the proposed team ministry and patronage board, in line with the name of the proposed new benefice and parish.
42. Although not part of the proposals, it does not believe that devoting resources to a church plant in the Newport area is the correct response. It also echoes the concern that the two extra posts for which grant funding will be needed will not be self-supporting at the end of the five years.

### **Summary of the Bishop of Portsmouth's response**

43. The Bishop's explanation of the diocesan strategy behind these proposals is set out in **Annex I**. He says that these parishes have a total population of around 25,000, but with a total Sunday attendance of only 265 people, representing 1.06% of the local population. Even increasing attendance to 2% of the local population would make a significant impact in mission. He provides tables showing the numbers attending and attendance as a percentage of the population for all the parishes concerned since 2009. He says that the rate of decline in Newport, the Isle of Wight's most

strategically important town, is significantly faster than in most other areas of Portsmouth Diocese.

44. He fully accepts that the above figures, supplied by the parishes annually via the Mission Statistics, do not give a complete picture of the life of a parish, but considers that usual Sunday attendance remains the figure that most accurately reflects members of the Church that can contribute to mission and ministry, as well as giving financially to its life, thereby underpinning its sustainability for the future.
45. He says that the combined parish share for the affected parishes is £139,000 (though one parish carries a debt of £29,000) against a ministry cost of £154,000. He wishes to create a single-parish benefice across the area to allow better co-ordination of mission energy, finance and staffing, with strong vision and leadership, aided by skilled operations/ administrative support, underpinning all ministry and mission in the area.
46. The Bishop explains that the consultation process began in October 2018 and that there have been multiple meetings with the incumbents, PCCs, the deanery chapter, the deanery synod, and an initial open public meeting. He accepts that the decision to hold the public meeting at All Saints, Ryde, which was seen as a neutral place, and one presumed to have good acoustics and a large screen, was perhaps unhelpful for some in terms of access. He says that the notes of this meeting had not been intended as a formal record but had been shared when requested.
47. He gives details of the various meetings held and says that a number of concerns were raised at the initial stages: that the DMPC was seeking to close churches; about the loss of current clergy; that the proposal to divide the urban and rural parts of Carisbrooke showed a lack of understanding of the parish's history; that the DMPC did not understand the issue of travelling around between rural parishes with no regular public transport. There also seemed to be a presumption that the DMPC did not know or understand the work already undertaken by the parishes. However, there was also hope that with more resources the churches could grow and be more missionally outward facing.
48. He says that changes were made to the initial proposals as a result of the consultations, including the omission of Arreton St George, Brading and Newchurch, All Saints from the final proposals; he therefore does not accept that the proposals were set in stone from the outset. He says that mediation was suggested but some of the affected clergy did not want the process further delayed as they were already finding it very difficult.
49. The Bishop states that there was no pre-judgement of a team ministry or skewing of the proposals in favour of one. The initial consultation was on proposals only for changes to the benefices, making no suggestion as to what the structures below the benefice level should look like. He says that the decision on whether there should be a team ministry or a group ministry was taken by the DMPC at its meeting on 3 April 2019, after a full

discussion of the views expressed during the informal and formal consultations. This also encompassed the differences between team and group ministries, following a concern raised by one of the parishes that a DMPC representatives appeared not to understand these at one of the consultation meetings. The outcome was that the DMPC felt that a single parish benefice with a team ministry was the most suitable structure to enable a coordinated approach to mission across Newport and Carisbrooke.

50. The DMPC saw the benefits of the proposed structure as providing: one decision-making body; a coordinated plan for mission and ministry across the area; a focus on creating space in church for those without an active Christian faith; the protection of both traditional and new forms of worship; the ability to appoint stipendiary and self-supporting lay and ordained ministers across the team, co-ordinate their energies and achieve economies of scale in their work; a coordinated approach to the use and management of buildings; and planning across the team to encourage stewardship and the generation of a sustaining income.
51. Reasons why the DMPC did not favour a group ministry included: the lack of a body to make strategic mission-focused decisions; the diocesan experience that groups may work well at the start, but not in the longer term due to clergy changes or differences in personality; a weaker structure for the deployment of additional posts, as a group ministry cannot legally act as an employer; responsibility for the cure of souls for all areas not being shared between all members of the group; and lack of authority for incumbent-status members outside their own parishes.
52. The Bishop outlines the proposal for a single-parish benefice, with the PCC delegating some functions to small local DCCs who would remain in control of finances relating to their congregational worship and the more minor aspects of their buildings. DCCs would relate to the PCC via common elected members and by the clergy who could attend any of the DCC meetings. Decisions about mission and outreach will be made by the PCC allowing finance and resources to follow strategic mission decisions across the team. Each DCC would retain responsibility for its own church building and the restricted funds related to it, so that funds for one church could not be used on another.
53. He says that DCCs instead of PCCs would decrease the administrative burden, as a DCC is created at the discretion of the PCC and the Church Representation Rules enables it to participate in the life of its church without the same responsibilities as a PCC's. The intention here is to employ an operations manager, who would have responsibility for resourcing all churches, as an addition to the existing administrative support.
54. The Bishop says that the DMPC has agreed that the proposed structure needs to be in place irrespective of whether the Diocese is awarded additional funding by the Commissioners. It considers a single-parish

benefice with a team ministry to be the best structure to support the mission envisaged here, and to be in line with the advice in relation to the Gaulby judgement. Gatcombe's future for the longer term was yet to be determined, hence the wish that it should not be united with the other benefices and parishes.

55. The Bishop feels that an increase from the current 2.8 clergy posts to four ministry posts, plus one full-time operations manager, is not insignificant. He says that the long-term sustainability of the additional posts is rooted in the anticipated growth during the period of the Commissioners' Funding. He says that there have been difficulties in the past over recruitment to the Island but 'taster days' of the lifestyle on offer there to clergy and their families, coupled with significant improvements to their vicarages, has already begun to reverse that position. He points out that the Island has a significant number of lay pastoral assistants and retired clergy whose skills would also be used to care for the parishioners in the area.
56. With regard to Canon Arkell's concern that the Commissioners' funding may not be well spent, the Bishop thinks that is a matter for the Strategic Investment Board which oversees such funding to assess.
57. The Bishop points out that the PCCs of Newport St John and Carisbrooke (St Mary) are supportive of the proposed structure, as is the PCC of Barton St Paul, as long as its churchmanship is catered for appropriately. To this end parish profiles would be drawn up as if the then united parishes were still separate, in order that anyone applying for the roles of team rector or team vicars would have a clear sense of the broad team they would be a member of if appointed.
58. The Bishop does not feel that his proposals hinder any of the recommendations in the Review of Newport Minster, as the Friends of the Minster would continue to oversee the work there and support would be offered via the Archdeacon and the diocesan team to ensure that the restoration project continued. He is therefore not inclined to delay the proposed Scheme until the Minster's restoration is completed.
59. The Bishop makes it clear that dispossession of the current clergy is not the primary purpose of the Scheme: the roles being envisaged would be different to the clergy roles that already exist. The example of the 'team rector' and a 'church-planting team vicar' has been widely circulated, as this is a potential team ministry model that his DMPC members would like to see, but is not set in stone, as it could be that the team rector or a pioneer minister had the church-planting expertise. Hence the desire to have these appointments made via an open and transparent recruitment process, to ensure that those appointed have the relevant gifts for these new roles. He says that the appointments made in the recent Scheme for the West Wight team ministry are not comparable, as the team rector and team vicar there had been specifically recruited on the basis of their skills to work in the envisaged team.

60. He says that the level of support in General Synod for the recent changes to the compensation provisions indicates that there is a recognition in the wider Church that ways needed to be found to enable dioceses to undertake pastoral reorganisation which may result in dispossession of clergy in order to further its Mission. Dispossession of existing incumbents is not something that the Diocese takes lightly but the new offices being proposed will not obviously accommodate or suit all of their existing clergy. Where such Schemes involve a reduction in similar posts, he and the DMPC felt, in the interests of fairness, it would be wrong to designate some of the existing clergy to new roles via the proposed Schemes over others. He also points out that some of the affected clergy have themselves felt called to other roles or have been unsure of their calling to the proposed new offices.
61. The Bishop says that he fully understands the frustrations expressed by those at Barton over its long interregnum, despite which its congregation has shown resilience and faith and has grown in numbers. If the draft Scheme proceeds, a team vicar would be recruited with specific responsibility for St Paul's and he would hope to find a person called to lead there, so that there would be no cause for members to seek an alternative spiritual home. The Bishop notes that the legislation does not offer scope for a Scheme to make specific provisions for different forms of churchmanship but says that his practice is only to license priests to a particular cure of souls who he believes can minister appropriately there, and always to seek the explicit support of parish representatives. He says there is no intention to close St Paul's, Barton for regular public worship.
62. The parsonage of the Newport (Minster) benefice has been designated as the parsonage house of the proposed new benefice and place of residence of the team rector as it is the only property in Church ownership in the centre of Newport. There are no plans to replace this property, which is a nine-minute walk from the church and parish office, as efforts to find a suitable alternative house over the last year have been unsuccessful. He provides details of all three current parsonage houses.

### **The Sifting Group's decision**

63. The case has been examined by the Committee's case sifting representatives who recommended the matter should be considered at a Public Hearing rather than on the papers alone. The Group felt that fairness to the representors required a Hearing and that the Committee would be significantly helped in its consideration by the opportunity to question them and diocesan representatives.

### **Supplementary views of representors**

64. Seven representors against the draft Scheme and one in favour commented on the Bishop's response. Their comments are attached as **Annex J**.

## **The supplementary views of the Bishop**

65. The diocesan representatives will respond to the supplementary views at the Hearing.

## **Information for the Committee**

66. The Committee's particular attention is drawn to the advice in the Code of Practice to the Mission and Pastoral Measure on dispossessions of clergy (attached as **Annex E**) and the extract from the Code on the implications of the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on an appeal relating to a Pastoral Scheme for the benefice of Gaulby, (attached as **Appendix F**). The Official Solicitor will brief members in more detail on these issues at the meeting before the case is heard.
67. One effect of the Church Representation and Ministers Measure 2019, which is expected to take effect on 1 January 2020, is that the current provision in the Church Representation Rules for group councils, to which the PCCs in a group ministry may delegate functions, will be replaced by a wider provision for joint councils, which will be corporate bodies having the power to employ people.
68. An amendment of the names of the team ministry and its patronage board on the face of the Scheme, as requested by the PCC of Carisbrooke St Mary, could be made as editorial amendments if agreed by the Bishop.

## **The Issues**

69. The main issues to be considered are as follows:
- (i) Does the Committee accept the Bishop's reasons for the need to reorganise these benefices and parishes as set out in the diocesan rationale attached to the draft Scheme, in his reply on the representations at Annex H and in his summary of the Diocesan Strategy set out in Annex I? Is there adequate evidence to support the Bishop's views?
  - (ii) To what extent are the provisions in the draft Scheme linked to the Diocese's application for Strategic Development Funding? Is this a factor which can legitimately be taken into account in considering pastoral reorganisation? Are the additional posts envisaged to make the reorganisation work effectively dependent on such Funding and are they likely to be sustainable in the longer term?
  - (iii) Has there been a full and thorough process of consultation on these proposals? Has it fulfilled the legal requirements? Have the Bishop and DMPC been willing to take account of the views expressed during the consultation process?

- (iv) In particular, were the proposals for reorganisation prejudged by the Bishop and DMPC in favour of a single-parish benefice with a team ministry? Does the Committee agree with the Bishop's reasons for preferring this to a group ministry?
- (v) Is there sufficient local support for what is proposed to make it likely that a team ministry will operate effectively? Does the proposal take sufficient account of churchmanship differences between the existing parishes? Are these likely to prevent it working effectively?
- (vi) Are the existing parishes' traditions likely to be adequately safeguarded in the proposed arrangements? In particular, are the concerns of the St Paul's, Barton congregation about appointments compatible with its traditions likely to make it difficult to appoint team members, or lead to a significant number of the congregation leaving the Church of England, with a detrimental effect on its current mission activities? Is the application of parish funds likely to be a divisive issue?
- (vii) Should the Bishop and DMPC be asked to give further consideration to a group ministry? Would a mediation process be likely to lead to a greater measure of agreement about what pastoral arrangements should be made?
- (viii) Does the Committee accept the Bishop's reasons for not naming any of the current clergy as the first holders of offices in the proposed new benefice and dispossessing them from their existing posts? Is this compatible with the advice in the Code of Practice? Would it conflict with the principles laid down in the Gaulby Judgement?
- (ix) Do the provisions of the draft Scheme contradict the Newport Minster Review's recommendations? If so, are there good reasons for overriding the Review? Is the Scheme likely to hinder completion of the Minster restoration project and, if so, should the implementation of the Scheme be delayed until the project is completed?
- (x) Should further consideration be given to the housing provisions in the draft Scheme?
- (xi) Do the proposals make "better provision for the cure of souls" in accordance with the long title of the Mission and Pastoral Measure and do they also have due regard to the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England?

### **The Options open to the Committee**

70. There are four possible outcomes:

- (a) To allow the Scheme to proceed as drafted.




- (b) To propose specific amendments to the draft Scheme and allow it to proceed subject to the Bishop's agreement and such further consultations as the Committee sees fit.
- (c) To decide that the Scheme should not be made.
- (d) To refer the Scheme back to the Bishop for further consideration.

**Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to consider the representations and the issues set out in this paper.

Church House  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3AZ

10 July 2019



RA (Signed) Rex Andrew



Annex A

A copy of the draft Pastoral Scheme



SUMMARY OF MAIN PROVISIONS OF DRAFT SCHEME (NOT PART OF THE DRAFT SCHEME)

*This draft Scheme provides for:*

- (i) terminating the plurality established for the benefice of Carisbrooke, the benefice of St Nicholas in the Castle, Carisbrooke and the benefice of Gatcombe;*
- (ii) the union of the benefice of Barton, the benefice of Carisbrooke, the benefice of St Nicholas in the Castle, Carisbrooke, the benefice of Newport St John and the benefice of Newport and their constituent parishes and for the establishment of a team ministry for the new benefice of Newport Minster, St John, Carisbrooke and Barton. It also provides for the cure of souls in the new benefice to be shared by a team rector and two team vicars, their housing arrangements and for the future patronage arrangements for the new benefice; and*
- (iii) the new benefice of Newport Minster, St John, Carisbrooke and Barton and the benefice of Gatcombe to be held in plurality and the team ministry referred to in (ii) above to be extended to the latter benefice*  
*in the diocese of Portsmouth.*

**DRAFT**

**PASTORAL SCHEME**

This Scheme is made by the Church Commissioners this        day of  
20    in pursuance of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 ("the 2011  
Measure"), the Right Reverend Christopher, Bishop of Portsmouth, having  
consented thereto.

**Termination of plurality**

1.     The plurality established for the benefice of Carisbrooke, the benefice of Saint Nicholas in the Castle, Carisbrooke and the benefice of Gatcombe by an Order made by the said Bishop in pursuance of the 2011 Measure on the 26th day of March 2014 shall be terminated.

**Union of benefices and parishes**

2.     (1)    The benefice of Barton, the benefice of Carisbrooke, the benefice of Saint Nicholas in the Castle, Carisbrooke, the benefice of Newport Saint John and the benefice of Newport shall be united to create a new benefice which shall be named "The Benefice of Newport Minster, Saint John, Carisbrooke and Barton".

(2)    The parish of Barton, the parish of Carisbrooke, the parish of Saint Nicholas in the Castle, Carisbrooke, the parish of Newport Saint John and the parish of Newport shall also be united to create a new parish which shall be named "The Parish of Newport Minster, Saint John, Carisbrooke and Barton" and shall comprise the area of the new benefice.

### **Parish churches**

3. All the parish churches of the parishes referred to in clause 2(2) hereof shall be parish churches of the new parish.

### **Archdeaconry and deanery**

4. The new benefice and parish shall belong to archdeaconry of the Isle of Wight and the deanery of the Isle of Wight.

### **Establishment of team ministry**

5. (1) A team ministry (to be known as "The Newport Team Ministry") shall be established for the area of the new benefice.

(2) The cure of souls in that area shall be shared by the incumbent of the new benefice, whose office shall be that of rector in the team ministry, and two other ministers, each of whom shall have the title of vicar and a status equal to that of an incumbent of a benefice.

(3) That area shall be in the pastoral care of those who are to share the cure of souls therein together with all other persons who are from time to time authorised by licence or permission of the Bishop to serve in that area as members of the team.

### **Presentation of rector**

6. The rector shall be presented by a patronage board (to be known as "The Newport Patronage Board") constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Schedule hereto.

### **The offices of vicar in the team ministry**

7. (1) The vicars in the team ministry shall be chosen by the Bishop and the rector jointly.

(2) The licence of the Bishop under his episcopal seal appointing the holder thereto may (subject to variation or revocation of any such provision with the consent of the rector and the vicar by subsequent licence under seal) -

- (a) assign to a vicar a special cure of souls in respect of a part of the said area and, if appropriate, the name of vicar of a church in that part;
- (b) assign to a vicar a special responsibility for a particular pastoral function;
- (c) provide that any such special cure or responsibility shall be independent of the rector's general responsibility;
- (d) assign to a vicar a general responsibility to be shared with the rector for the cure of souls in the said area as a whole.

### **Representation of the laity**

8. The Bishop may by Instrument under his hand, with the concurrence of the rector, make provision -

- (a) for ensuring due representation of the congregation of each church or place of worship on the parochial church council of the new parish of Newport Minster, Saint John, Carisbrooke and Barton;

- (b) for the election of a district church council for any district in the said parish in which a church or place of worship is situated and for the constitution, chairmanship and procedure of that council;
- (c) for the functions of the parochial church council of the said parish which must or may be delegated to the district church council;
- (d) for the election or choice of deputy churchwardens for any church or place of worship and for the functions of churchwardens of the said parish which must or may be delegated to the deputy churchwardens;

being provisions to the same effect as those which may be made by a Scheme under the Church Representation Rules in the like case.

#### **Places of residence**

9. (1) The parsonage house of the benefice of Newport (known as The Vicarage, 72a, Medina Avenue, Newport, PO30 1HF) shall be the place of residence of the rector.

(2) Subject to the direction of the Bishop, the vicars in the team ministry shall severally reside in:-

- (a) the parsonage house of the benefice of Carisbrooke;
- (b) the parsonage house of the benefice of Barton;
- (c) such other conveniently situated house or houses as may, with the Bishop's approval, be provided in substitution therefor.

#### **Transfer of parsonage houses**

10. (1) The parsonage house of the benefice of Carisbrooke (known as 56, Castle Road, Newport, PO30 1DP), together with the site and appurtenances thereof and the grounds usually occupied and enjoyed therewith, shall without any conveyance or other assurance be transferred to the Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Finance for diocesan purposes.

(2) The parsonage house of the benefice of Barton (known as Saint Pauls Vicarage, Staplers Road, Newport, PO30 2HZ), together with the site and appurtenances thereof and the grounds usually occupied and enjoyed therewith, shall without any conveyance or other assurance be transferred to the Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Finance for diocesan purposes.

#### **Holding of benefices in plurality**

11. (1) The new benefice of Newport Minster, Saint John, Carisbrooke and Barton created pursuant to clause 2(1) hereof and the benefice of Gatcombe shall be held in plurality by one incumbent.

(2) For the duration of the plurality authorised by clause 11(1) hereof the operation of the team ministry shall be extended to the cure of souls in the area of the benefice of Gatcombe.

(3) The right of presentation to the benefices so held in plurality (and for the duration only of the plurality) shall on each occasion be exercised by the Newport Patronage Board.

#### **Coming into operation of this Scheme**

12. If upon the date on which this Scheme is made no person holds an ecclesiastical office under Common Tenure which will be terminated by this Scheme and is in receipt of a stipend and/or other emoluments of office,

including accommodation, this Scheme shall come into operation on the first day of the month following the said date; but if on the said date any person holds such an office this Scheme shall come into effect six months thereafter or on such earlier date on which all such offices have been vacated.

**SCHEDULE**  
**Constitution of the Newport Patronage Board**

The patronage board referred to in clause 6 of this Scheme shall consist of:-

- (1) the following in right of their respective offices:-
  - (a) the Bishop of Portsmouth, who shall be chairman of the board and shall have one vote as a member of the board and a casting vote as chairman;
  - (b) the vicars in the team ministry, any deacon authorised to serve in the team ministry, and any person having special responsibility for pastoral care under section 34(8) of the 2011 Measure who shall jointly have one vote which shall be exercised by such one or more of them (acting alone, unanimously or by a majority) as may be present at the meeting in question;
  - (c) the incumbent of the benefice of Whippingham with East Cowes, who shall have one vote;
  
- (2) the Church Patronage Trust, Church Pastoral Aid Society Patronage Department, Sovereign Court One (Unit 3), Sir William Lyons Road, University of Warwick Science Park, Coventry, CV4 7EZ, which shall have one vote;
  
- (3) the Provost and Scholars of the Queen's College in the University of Oxford, who shall have one vote.

In witness whereof the Church Commissioners have caused their Common Seal to be hereunto affixed.

SIGNED by the Right Reverend Christopher, )  
Bishop of Portsmouth. )

Executed as a Deed by the affixing of the )  
Common Seal of the Church )  
Commissioners in the presence of:- )

AUTHENTICATING OFFICER

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## Notes by the Diocesan office (not forming part of the draft Scheme)

The Commissioners have been told by the Bishop on the advice of his Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee that the rationale behind the diocesan proposals is as follows:

**The proposed union of benefices and parishes is necessary to free up people and finances, as well as decrease the burden of administration and buildings, from maintaining a declining/static church and to support cohesive working across the whole area of Newport and Carisbrooke. The benefice of Gatcombe will be held in plurality with the proposed new benefice whilst its longer-term future is determined.**

Publication of this draft Scheme by the Commissioners does not mean that we have taken a view on the merits of the diocesan case. We have a duty to publish draft Schemes based on diocesan proposals.

If we receive representations against the draft Scheme, we will send all representations, both for and against, to the Bishop whose views will be sought. Individual representors will then receive copies of our correspondence with the Bishop (including copies of all the representations) and they may comment further in writing to us in light of the diocesan response if they so wish.

If there are no representations against the draft Scheme, we will make the Scheme and arrange for it to be brought into effect.

### Team chapter and team

1. Under section 34(1) of the Mission and Measure 2011 the persons who are to share the cure of souls within the area of the benefice will constitute a team chapter and the team chapter together with the other persons referred to in clause 5(3) will constitute the team.
2. Section 13(1) and paragraphs 19 and 20 of Schedule 2 to the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 apply to the appointment of a team rector whereby the registered patron of a vacant benefice shall not make any priest an offer to present him or her to a benefice until the making of the offer to the priest in question has been approved by parish representatives of each parish in the team (unless a team council, or joint parochial church council for all the parishes in the benefice, has been established in which case such approval shall be by representatives of the team or joint parochial church council) and the Bishop.

3. Paragraph 2(6) of Schedule 3 to the Mission and Pastoral Measure provides that before the body or other persons who are entitled to choose a person to be a vicar in a team ministry make their choice, they shall consult -
- (a) the other members of the team;
  - (b) the parochial church council of every parish in the team ministry; and
  - (c) if a special cure of souls in respect of a part of the area is to be assigned in accordance with section 34(7)(a) to the vicar, any district church council concerned.
4. Paragraph 2(7)(a) of Schedule 3 to the Mission and Pastoral Measure provides that the body or other persons who are entitled to choose a person to be a vicar in a team ministry shall not make to any person an offer of appointment as such until the making of the offer to the person in question has been approved by the parish representatives of each parish in the team unless a team council has been established in which case such approval shall be by representatives of the team council.

#### Representation of the laity

5. The Mission and Pastoral Measure stipulates that any provision for the representation of the laity shall cease to have effect not later than five years from the date on which this Scheme comes into effect. It would, however, be possible under the Church Representation Rules to make similar provision for an unlimited period.

#### Churches etc

6. This Scheme does not alter the existing status of any of the churches, chapels of ease or licensed places of worship in the affected parishes.

#### Coming into effect clause

7. Under the provision of s39(3) of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 it is mandatory for a Pastoral Scheme which would have the effect of causing any ecclesiastical office held under Common Tenure the holder of which is in receipt of a stipend and/or accommodation to cease to exist to include the provision in clause 12 delaying the coming into effect of the Scheme for up to six months after it is made. This is to give such an office holder who would be dispossessed an opportunity to find another post before the Scheme takes effect. For the avoidance of doubt this provision is included in all cases where the possibility of such dispossession could arise but the six month delay provision will only become operative if someone in receipt of a stipend and/or accommodation, other than such a person who is appointed by the Scheme to another office, is actually in post on the day the Scheme is made.

### Dispossession of the clergy

8. As a result of the proposed union of the affected benefices and parishes provided for in clause 2, the existing benefices and parishes would cease to exist and the clergy licensed to them would be dispossessed from their current posts should the Scheme take effect. As they are not being appointed to new offices by the draft Scheme the affected clergy would be entitled to 12 months of their current stipend and pension contributions as a lump sum, and to be housed in suitable accommodation for the same 12 month-period (or, by agreement with the diocese, to receive payment in lieu of any such occupation).

### Appointments in the proposed new benefice

9. Should the draft Scheme come into effect the Bishop intends that appointments to all the possible offices in the new benefice would be by an open and transparent process. All the office-holders who would be dispossessed from the current benefices would be welcome to apply for any of these posts.

