



**MISSION IN REVISION:
REVIEW OF THE MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011
CONSULTATION ANALYSIS
JULY TO OCTOBER 2021**

**Report prepared for General Synod (February 2022)
GS Misc 1312**

Contents

Introduction	3
Consultation summary	4
Issues from the consultation	5
- Legal simplification and consultation	5
- Theology and ecclesiology	6
- Financial model	6
- Pastoral re-organisation	8
- Church building closure	10
- Equality and diversity	13
A revised Mission and Pastoral Measure	14
- Legislative Reform	14
- Models for a revised Mission and Pastoral Measure	17
Summary of responses to specific consultation questions	18
Conclusion and next steps	19
Annex A – a list of the organisations that responded to the review	20
Annex B – a summary of the responses to the individual questions	22
Annex C – a summary of the Commissioners’ consultation process	34

Introduction

1. In 2020 the Church Commissioners were asked by the Archbishops' Council to complete a review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 (MPM). The scoping note for the review was signed off by the Legislative Reform Committee in October 2020. The Commissioners published a 'Green' consultation paper entitled 'Mission in Revision' (GS2222)¹ for the July 2021 sessions of General Synod. Sixteen people spoke in the debate, and the motion to continue the work was carried: 278 in favour, 2 against and 7 abstentions. A copy of the debate is available on the MPM review web page and in the Synod record. The public consultation on the paper began in July and closed on 31 October 2021, and over 1,600 responses were received.

2. The motion tabled at Synod proposed that new legislation would be brought forward in July 2022. However, given the response to the consultation, the Commissioners now plan to bring forward a 'White Paper' with the actual proposals for legislative change to the July 2022 session of Synod, to allow time for further debate and consultation. Draft legislation would then be brought forward in February 2023 if Synod approved the programme of work.

3. The purpose of the consultation on the revision of the Mission and Pastoral Measure was to elicit views on what change might be needed and ideas for how it might be accomplished. What came across powerfully were messages about the mood in the Church, particularly from lay people and clergy in parishes. Partly because of the context of the pandemic, there was a downbeat feel to many of the responses and General Synod will recognise the strength of feelings that were reported. We heard from many respondents, lay and clergy, who are anxious and in many cases angry, about the direction they feel the Church is taking. Many made the case that the loss of stipendiary clergy has a negative effect on the Church's ability to follow its mission to be a Christian presence in every place, and they felt frustrated by the consolidation of parishes and benefices, particularly in rural areas, with some fearing that future decision making will solely be driven by financial concerns. Many respondents (lay and clergy) said they felt disenfranchised in the decision-making processes. Concerns about parish finances were raised, and many want to see much greater levels of direct investment into the mission of the parish. The question of closing church buildings was particularly emotive, with respondents highlighting how they are part of the visible Christian presence in every place and being fearful of what the future will bring and what may be lost.

4. The responses also showed the incredible levels of commitment that lay people and clergy have to their parishes, to supporting their communities during Covid, and to maintaining and looking after their church buildings, and their strong desire to see the work of the Church flourish.

5. This report summarises the feedback from consultation. The Commissioners will reflect deeply on what we have heard and how that should be carried forward into the work on the Mission and Pastoral Measure. Synod may wish to consider if other work is needed to respond to some of the other concerns raised. The Church Commissioners wish to record their sincere thanks to everyone who took part in the consultation. They are extremely grateful for all those who took the time to respond and share their views, which have been, and will be listened to, and considered with careful attention.

Wendy Matthews, Church Commissioners, January 2022

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/parish-reorganisation-and-church-property/review-mission-and-pastoral-measure-2011>

Consultation summary

6. In total **1,686** submissions were received in response to the consultation. The breakdown of the responses was as follows:

• submissions from individuals	1,495
• long submissions from individuals	77
• Parochial Church Councils (PCCs)	36
• deanery synod	1
• clergy representative organisations	2
• private patrons and patronage societies	15
• church related groups (e.g. bellringing, organs)	10
• building/heritage related bodies	16
• responses from diocesan teams	23
• Parliament and government	9
• petition	2
TOTAL	1,686

7. The vast majority of the individual responses we received were from lay people, and those were nearly all regular churchgoers, Parochial Church Council (PCC) members, Churchwardens, and volunteers. We did have a few responses from individuals who did not go to church, but cared about the issues and wanted to express a view. Whilst fewer in number, we also received responses from parish priests (stipendiary and self supporting), as well as archdeacons, rural deans, and some lay readers. The responses were well balanced in terms of gender.

8. The online survey gave people the option to include information about age and gender if they wished. Only about a third of the people responding filled that in, but of those that did, we had the most responses from those aged 45-59 (25%), 60-69 (33%) and over 70 (31%), with fewer responses from those aged 30-44 (9%) and 18-29 (2%).

9. We had responses from a number of organisations including PCCs, those concerned with patronage, church activities like bellringing, and heritage and building related organisations. A list of the organisations that contributed is at Annex A.² The privacy notice for the consultation stated that all the individual responses would be treated as confidential, and that any quotes used would be anonymised.

10. The responses were all given the same weight in the analysis. We will do further work on the detailed responses to inform the July 2022 White Paper.

² Couples who sent in a joint e-mail were treated as one submission, but those who sent in two e-mails were treated as separate submissions. We also had some submissions which used the same text which were counted as separate contributions as they were from different individuals.

Issues from the consultation

11. This section summarises the key themes from the individual consultation responses. Annex B sets out a summary of the answers which were submitted on the questions in the GS2222 consultation document.

12. The tone of the responses to the consultation varied widely. The majority of the responses were from individuals raising significant concerns, but there were also respondents who wrote to express their support for the review and who were in favour of more substantive change to the Measure. Most of the responses from individuals were short, but there were also longer responses which gave views on particular topics within the consultation paper. There was also a substantial number of lengthier submissions from individuals and PCCs which engaged with the consultation questions in detail. We also received responses from diocesan teams, private patrons and patronage societies, and a wide range of church related bodies and organisations, including those who work with historic church buildings. The tone of the organisational responses was generally more measured and often more supportive of the proposals in the consultation paper. All the responses were read and considered as part of this analysis and the Commissioners will continue to take account of what has been said as the actual proposals for a revised Measure are developed.

Legal simplification and consultation

13. Individual respondents expressed a strong desire to see simplification, in a broad sense, because of the perception that it could reduce the resource pressure on parishes. There were many respondents calling for the simplification to take the form of leaner organisations, a reduction in the number of dioceses and bishops, and in the number of staff working in both the National Church Institutions and the Diocesan offices. Many did not see the simplification of ecclesiastical legislation or processes as a priority, did not believe that simplification would be beneficial, and were concerned that simplification could lead to a weakening of the parish system. Responses ranged from one respondent who said “The bureaucratic process should be difficult and awkward,” to a PCC response which said “...we understand and support the wish to streamline what we also perceive to be excessive rules and regulations as a means of relieving...pressures. In turn these might permit more time for pastoral care.”

14. Many respondents raised concerns about the process of the consultation, suggesting that it would have been better to have had a parish-led process first before the development of proposals. The Church Commissioners’ aim in publishing the Synod paper in July was to ensure that the whole Church would indeed have the chance to comment on the Green Paper, prior to any proposals for legislative reform being developed. A range of people were consulted on the initial phase of the review including clergy and lay people (see Annex C).

Theology and ecclesiology

15. Some of the respondents thought that more work needed to be done to articulate the theology and ecclesiology which underpins the Measure. The purpose of the Measure is set out in its long title as being “to make better provision for the cure of souls” and the Measure imposes a duty on any person or body carrying out functions under the Measure (which includes diocesan mission and pastoral committees, diocesan bishops, and the Church Commissioners) to have due regard “to the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England”, which is defined as “the

whole mission of the Church of England, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical”. In other words, the legislation has in view the Church’s core purpose.

16. A number of the consultation responses were concerned that legal simplification was an end in itself, rather than a means to an end, and therefore felt that the review lacked a sound theological basis and underpinning principles. What the comments suggested more broadly was that the traditional concepts of Anglican ecclesiology are changing. This was seen, for example, in the number of people who asked how the ‘diocese’ was defined. Many made a strong distinction between the work of the ‘dioceses’, i.e. the bishop and the staff team, and the parish, with some arguing that the interests of the parish are not the interests of the diocese.

17. There is scope to do more work on the underlying theology, for example in relation to the process of mourning that communities go through when a church building closes. We discussed the consultation paper with the Liturgical Commission, and they are interested in doing some further work on what liturgical resources could be provided to support the change process that communities experience during a pastoral reorganisation, or church closure.

Financial model

18. It was very clear that as church resources come under pressure it can cause tension, and strain the relationships and trust between some people in the parish and diocesan and national church teams. The sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’ was very strong in many of the responses from both clergy and laity. One respondent hoped that General Synod would “take on board the scale of exasperation verging on militancy” now prevalent among the lay people of the Church. There was a lot of concern expressed that the diocesan and national teams did not understand the work of the parish, or its value, and were disconnected from the reality of parish life. Many respondents did not believe that the Church was using its resources well and that this meant unreasonable pressure was being put on parishes to increase their contributions to parish share. There was a narrative that the system was becoming increasingly unfair, and a perceived lack of transparency and communication, which was deepening distrust. Re-establishing relationships and building trust is something that the Steering Group overseeing work on the “Emerging Church” programme will need to prioritise and consider further.

19. Many of the consultation responses showed that there are widespread misunderstandings about how funding flows through the Church and what the various bodies, including the Church Commissioners, can and cannot fund. As pressure on financial resources grows, more work needs to be done to encourage a better shared understanding of how the Church finances work and how information can be communicated clearly. For example, although we came across documents showing dioceses were working hard to communicate clearly how parish share is being used, the responses showed there is a lack of understanding about:

- how parish share is used by the relevant Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) and how much money DBFs pay to, or receive from, the National Church Institutions³
- how funding flows between the Church Commissioners, the Archbishops’ Council, and the other National Church Institutions

³ Data is published on the funding given to dioceses by the Archbishop’s Council. Some funding requires diocesan teams to complete an application. See <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/AC%20grants%20to%20dioceses.pdf>.

- what the Church Commissioners can and cannot fund and how their distribution strategy works⁴

20. Some respondents suggested that parish finances had been put under pressure from the 1970s onwards when the Endowment and Glebe Measure 1976 led to the transfer of benefice glebe assets⁵ to the dioceses, and it has been argued that the Commissioners also benefitted from this legislation. Some responses also mentioned the Commissioners' losses in the 1990s and the perceived negative impact that had on diocesan balance sheets. The issue of parsonage ownership and disposal continues to be a sensitive issue and was highlighted by some respondents.

21. Many respondents were also concerned about the pressures that the repair and maintenance of historic and listed church buildings were putting on PCCs and local communities. Although there were many positive examples cited of communities raising the money for repairs, there were concerns that if demands for parish share increased, there would be less funding for looking after buildings. People wanted to continue to look after their churches, but there were calls for the Commissioners to provide more funding for fabric. The Commissioners currently provide funding for the Churches Conservation Trust⁶ (CCT) with some of the proceeds from the disposal of closed churches. Two-thirds of the disposal proceeds are returned to the relevant Diocesan Pastoral Account held by the DBF, and the remaining one-third is used by the Commissioners to fund new vestings in the CCT. However, this model is coming under increasing pressure because the vesting costs are rising, and the funding available means that only a few churches can be vested in the CCT in each triennium period and that is not sufficient given the number and quality of listed churches in England.

22. Over time, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has increased its contribution to the CCT in absolute terms (which has been extremely welcome). More recently it made capital available for church repairs through the Cultural Recovery Fund as part of its Covid response, and PCCs were able to apply for support for projects. However, there is still a need for a wider debate about how ecclesiastical heritage can be funded in the long term. This is a matter which will be considered by the Bishops (Bristol and Ramsbury) who now hold the brief for church buildings in the House and College of Bishops.

Pastoral re-organisation

The importance of place and structures to support ministry and mission

23. Over the last 20 years, the Church has started to evolve different structures for how it orders worship, mission, and ministry. At a diocesan level, the principal units of mission are the parish, cathedral, deanery, and archdeaconry. (The benefice is formally the office of rector/vicar of a parish/parishes, with the cure of souls). Other mission structures have now emerged from

⁴ Summary leaflets are available about the Commissioners' work and investment strategy – see <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/church-commissioners-england/church-commissioners-england-useful>

⁵ The transfer of glebe assets was important because it meant that all clergy could for the first time receive the same level of stipend. When dioceses decided to sell glebe property after 1978 the funds were held by the Church Commissioners, as Custodian Trustees for the various Diocesan Stipends Funds (DSF) so they had no direct benefit themselves. Each dioceses directed the Commissioners how its DSF capital should be invested e.g. in glebe property, or used to purchase clergy housing and the income from investment supported stipends. In the early 2000s, the Commissioners' Custodian Trustee role ceased, and the funds and investments have since been held as well as managed by the dioceses. These funds are restricted and can only be used to support the stipends of clergy in the diocese or the provision of housing.

⁶The CCT was established by the 1969 Pastoral Measure and it looks after 356 historically significant and important Anglican churches. See visitchurches.org.uk.

diocesan strategies which use a different geography of mission areas, mission communities or similar. These structures may overlay the traditional parish structure, or be connected to it through cross-licensing, which allows priests to be ministers in different areas and churches. In some cases, such as Wigan in the Diocese of Liverpool (quoted in GS2222), the legal structure has been re-ordered so that the deanery became one benefice. Some of these structural changes are happening as part of strategic development/transformation projects.

24. As part of the review, more work will need to be done with the House and College of Bishops to understand how mission structures and the traditional geographical structures are expected to relate to each other in the future, as there are various models emerging. The consultation responses shows that many are very concerned about the implications of such change for the parish system. The emergence of mission structure models may also be another cultural reason why some parish communities feel disconnected from the overall mission of the diocese and add to the sense that the parish is not the focal point for ministry.

25. The responses we had from the clergy associations also highlighted tensions around the relationship between the traditional structure and mission structures. The English Clergy Association said “The creation of structures of ministry based on large administrative areas and the introduction of another layer of administration remote from the local communities, is untried, untested and fraught with danger. Such centralised forms of ministry would distance the Church further from the people it seeks to serve and would be counter-productive, particularly in rural communities.” In terms of a solution the ECA said, “We would contend that only through local churches being revitalised with the help and enthusiasm of local stipendiary clergy can new money be found...any money available should resource the local parishes both in terms of personnel and grants for imaginative schemes.”

26. Some of the respondents were very concerned that the centralisation that they felt had been experienced by many public services, including in health and education, was happening in the Church system, which they saw as a negative development. Some suggested the parish system is becoming like the NHS where patients are losing their connection to a GP who knows them and their family. They talked about how much more important it is to have a relationship with clergy when it comes to spiritual matters. Respondents particularly highlighted concerns about the development of larger parishes and benefices. One respondent said “Removing a parish priest who has the cure (care) of souls and replacing that person with some unknown minister from a pool or team, who has no knowledge of the individual parishioner, is a recipe for disaster. Certainly public worship can be led by any priest who is assigned to come to a particular church, on a specific Sunday. That is not the same as the relationship which is present during the other six days of the week.”

28. Other respondents referenced the Beeching cuts which were made to the railways in the 1960s and how it led to the decline of communities, partly because the local lines were “ripped out rather than mothballed”. The comparison was made in relation to church building closure and the need to keep as many buildings open as possible.

29. Many respondents wanted incumbents and PCCs to have more autonomy and power in the decision-making processes related to pastoral reorganisation. There was concern that more powers might be given to the diocesan bishop and their team, in relation to the Measure, and that rights would be completely removed from individuals. Issues of ownership were also reflected here, both in terms of the importance of an incumbent’s rights, as corporation sole, and in terms of the PCC’s relationship to the church buildings and parsonages.

30. A lot of the individual e-mail responses were from people who attend rural churches who emphasised the importance of place. Many respondents wrote movingly of why the church matters so much to rural communities, how it is often the only community building that still functions, and how much the building itself matters – the need for sacred still spaces where people can contemplate and just be. One respondent said that “loyalty to locality” was “part of their cement” in rural churches. A cultural preference was also expressed by some for worshipping in church buildings and not private houses and related to that, some people were concerned about some of the broader proposals around lay ministry in that context, which are not related to the review of the Measure. However, others took the counter view: one PCC suggested that the review should “investigate what greater freedoms might be allowed for the PCC and its lay members – rather more ‘do it yourself’ if it would help cement the future.”

31. On a more specific point, in GS2222 we noted at paragraph 86 that “Pastoral schemes do not lay out in detail how incumbents will meet their obligations in relation to the cure of souls, which is often a significant issue for representors.” One clergy respondent felt this was one of the most important issues that needed to be addressed in the review. He quoted a particular example where the ‘arithmetic’ in relation to number of services looked fine, but did not work so well in practice and had led to a clergy person going sick with stress. He went on to say, “...so it is reasonable to ask a parish to list the patterns of worship before the reorganisation, but it is also reasonable to ask, robustly, parishes together to identify the pattern of worship which will serve the church into the future.” This is important because it is relevant to the points the Archbishop of York has made recently about how the parish can be revitalised for mission.

Clergy dispossession

32. As part of the review the Commissioners have been working closely with the Church of England Clergy Advocates (CECA), and there were discussions at both the standing committees of the House of Clergy and the House of Laity of Synod about the clergy issues addressed in the paper. Both CECA and the English Clergy Association (ECA) submitted responses to the consultation. Clergy dispossession has always been a feature of pastoral reorganisation and was considered most recently when the MPM was consolidated in 2018. There is no intention to change the fundamental provisions around dispossession, but in GS2222 a question was asked about how the processes could be made more pastorally sensitive and if a different appeals process was required.

33. Responses were mixed – some felt more could be done to draw on the good practice of Employment Tribunals and other models as an independent appeal mechanism where someone loses their office, but others felt the current model worked well and it would be difficult in practice to separate the dispossession elements from the processes for pastoral schemes (since pastoral schemes primarily have in view structural questions focused on the missional needs of a diocese or part of a diocese). The submissions both put more emphasis on the need for more financial compensation for dispossessed clergy (up to 5 years), and greater help to find new posts for clergy, than they did on a new appeals process. The ECA wanted to ensure that any changes to the MPM were consistent with the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing.

Parish traditions and characteristics

34. One of the key parts of the existing Measure is the need for any pastoral reorganisation to take account of the needs, traditions, and characteristics of a particular parish when change is considered. We did not have a large number of responses on this matter, but there were some who wrote to say that the rights of resolution parishes need to be protected in the legislation and

the Five Guiding Principles upheld. There is a wider issue here about the concept of a mixed ecology approach, and how the Church ensures the continuing mix of traditions in a situation where there may be more consolidation of benefices or parishes.

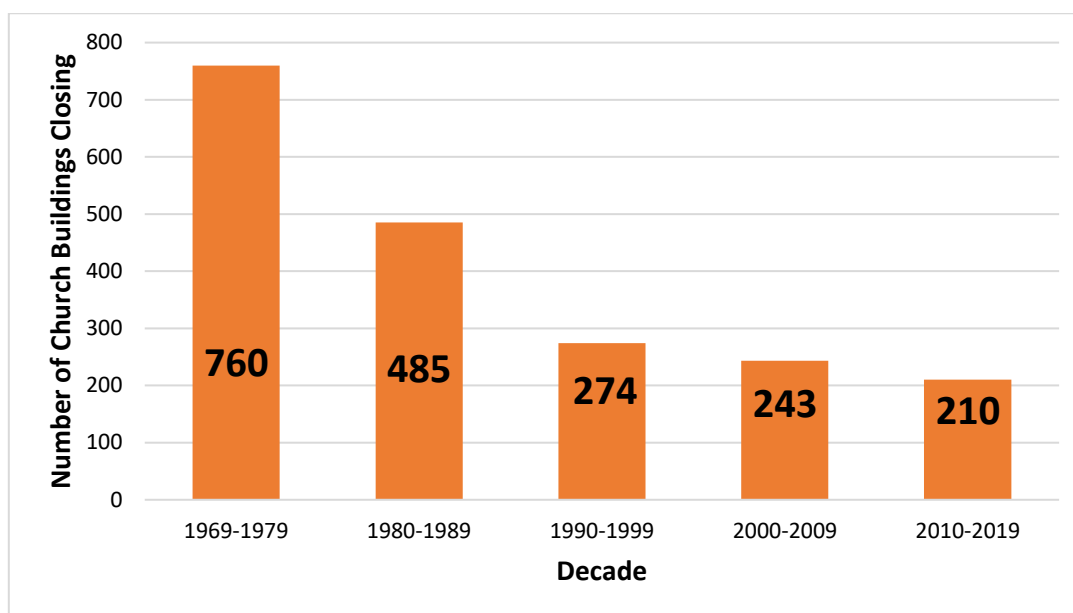
Church building closure

35. 'Closure' was the single word that was mentioned most in the e-mail correspondence, and which particularly reflected the collective trauma of the pandemic. It was clear that many of the communities and individuals who responded are raw and anxious, and that makes it a difficult time to talk about change in the Church. Many of the e-mails received showed that people did not want any change which would make it easier to close churches. It was not always clear if this meant the church building, or whether it was being used as a shorthand for the loss of clergy posts as well. There were many e-mails which set out the importance of the parish church to the community, and of the church building, the role the Church had played during Covid, and the need for better pastoral care and more stipendiary clergy. As one respondent put it, "The parish church forms the stable heart and soul of their community within a world which appears increasingly fractured and broken, unsafe and alien". Another said, "The church belongs to the people of England, all of us. Our parish churches are the rocks that this country is built on, our source of spiritual inspiration and transcendent tranquillity." The tone of these e-mails was often angry, perhaps in many cases anger motivated by fear; fear of more loss and more change, which would result in the Church being less present in every place and less effective.

36. It is evident from the responses that many people were concerned that there might be a sudden increase in the number of church building closures, so it is important to put the trends in context. As the table below shows, the numbers of church building closures by decade has been dropping and we are at the lowest number of closures of consecrated churches in 50 years⁷. The fact that closure has dropped to a lower level is a testament to all the work that is done by PCCs, incumbents and local communities to keep churches open, and to the work of the teams in the dioceses and National Church Institutions who support those efforts. The figures presented in GS2222 were scenarios presented to demonstrate possible future trends, rather than a definite number of actual closures.⁸ Even in the worst-case scenario, it would represent a small proportion of the number of churches overall – roughly 1-2% out of 16,000. Many respondents however, clearly felt that this was still a significant amount.

⁷ The number of closures was high in 1969 because that was when the first MPM came into force which allowed churches to be closed and sold where there was a suitable alternative use. Note – this graph shows the closure of consecrated churches under the Measure, it does not include licensed places of worship.

⁸ For the full report on the sustainable uses of closed churches see <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/MPCP%2820%2931%20-%20An%20analysis%20of%20use%20types%20and%20sustainability%201969-2019.pdf>.



37. It is also important to say that church building closure is always a serious decision and it is not one that anyone undertakes lightly. Most dioceses wait for church communities to identify when they think closure is needed and only support it if the PCC approves the decision. A common example will be when there is a parish with two churches and the community decides it wants to close the chapel of ease, because it no longer has the capacity to look after both buildings.

38. The responses to the consultation show that the concept of church building closure is ripe for reconsideration. The nomenclature of ‘closure’ implies death and no longer reflects the reality of what often happens, or needs to happen, in local communities. General Synod debated the difference between the word ‘redundant’, which was used for closed churches in the 50s and 60s, and preferred ‘closure’, but neither is particularly helpful in the context we face now. There was a lot of support in the more detailed responses for a more flexible approach which would facilitate greater local autonomy and give more scope for a range of options. The legal framework could be revised to provide support for a more mixed-use approach. Examples could include:

- Allowing the lease of a whole chapel of ease or a closed church building to another Christian denomination, which is not currently possible. This could be done by extending the ability to lease under faculty.
- Making it simpler to lease a church for community or cultural use where there will be no changes made to the building.
- Having alternative governance arrangements so that a non-PCC group, such as a Friends group, could more easily take the legal responsibility and liability for a church building, but still allow it to be used for occasional public worship where that was wanted.

39. One respondent said, “There should be increased willingness for the CoE to ‘let go’ of buildings more easily” so that the community can work together better to keep the buildings open and accessible where there is the willingness and capacity to do so. Some respondents commented that the formal church closure process can be helpful because it alerts a local community to the issues and meant that people came forward to help. However, others have suggested that it would be far better if there was a more positive, shared conversation with the local community at an earlier stage on what the parish’s future planning might mean for the church

building. This kind of conversation could be particularly important in rural areas where the church building has a high cultural significance and where it may be the only community building still in operation.

40. There was a lot of support for the concepts of developing alternative ownership models, making greater use of Friends Groups, and developing new charitable bodies for vesting, but recognition that the funding model is weak and that makes it difficult to develop some of these options in a proactive way. There was positive support for the role and work of the Churches Conservation Trust, but similar concerns about a lack of finance restricting their capacity and potential to grow their role. It was particularly helpful to have a number of responses from county trusts who already have responsibility for closed church buildings.

41. We also had a number of responses from particular volunteer and interest groups, including bellringers and the organ community. Both emphasised the importance of making sure there was careful thinking about what happens to bells and organs, and other important contents when a church building is closed. There is some capacity to move bells and organs to other church buildings, but it is often an *ad hoc* process. Early engagement was seen as important and where possible bellringers welcomed being able to continue ringing after closure, if it was compatible with the future use of the building, e.g. community use. Moving bells was seen as being preferable to leaving them *in situ* if they could no longer be rung, which was viewed as the “worst of all scenarios”.

42. Some respondents also mentioned the potential for civil parish councils to play a greater role in helping the Church to keep local churches open. There have been longstanding legal issues which have prevented greater cooperation between PCCs and civil parish councils, and these were recognised in the 2017 Taylor review, which explored ways to improve the sustainability of churches and cathedrals. The action plan for the review includes changing the relevant legislation to allow closer working.⁹

43. Many responses demonstrated how committed clergy, lay people and others are to the day-to-day life of the parish and how hard people are working to further the mission of the Church. Positive examples were cited of small congregations successfully raising the funding needed to look after their church buildings and who were reaching out to their communities in forms of social action. We heard from families who had lost people to Covid and who were comforted by having access to a church community and building at a time of bereavement.

44. To quote one example, one respondent told us about All Saints, Hitcham, and how the church community had been able to prevent the church from closing.

Case study: All Saints, Hitcham

In the 1980s this church building was in a very poor state of repair, no longer weatherproof and with paint peeling off the walls. The easy option would have been to close it, it's a large building and the congregation was getting older. But we took the opposite route and this year we celebrated the completion of the final phase of the repairs, the additional bonus of restoring of the bells unusable for 100 years and building the facilities which mean the now weatherproof and redecorated building is also multifunctional. The more a community use a building the more they have an affinity with it and the more they will help to care for it.

⁹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669667/Taylor_Review_Final.pdf

We also now have a group of 10 regularly learning [how to] ring our new bells, five of who are not church goers but by going to the church building regularly each week now know it's a friendly place they don't need to feel apprehensive about going into.

Hitcham is a parish of 320 houses yet we raised over half a million pounds. Helped by the creation of a Friends organisation which encourages 'those of all faiths or none' to take out a small membership subscription (set at just £1 a month but with an option to give more). When over 100 people make a small annual contribution, it adds up, meaning that building maintenance and repairs are now tackled as they fall due. The clear evidence of the support of the community through this Friends charity also made raising funds for major work from grants much easier because it demonstrates commitment.

And yes, the congregation is slowly increasing as well, along with those who only attend at key festivals. So we continue to pay our Parish Share. They may be the basically same demographic, but they are the next generation of the same demographic.

When promoting our annual church gift day held to boost funds for the running of the church rather than the care of the building, we have taken to making it clear that much of this money goes to the fund which pays our rector's salary. One couple who are not church goers give to Gift Day 'because they believe that every village should have a church and a priest'.

Equality and diversity

45. Some of the respondents raised concerns that the work on the Measure was not doing enough to take the needs of particular communities of interest into account, and that there had been insufficient consultation on the issues. There are a number of areas where issues of equality and diversity could be considered more specifically in terms of the legal regime. For example, we need to give more consideration to how we can ensure there is equality and accessibility in the processes, so that everyone has the ability to engage. This could include a need to provide materials in a variety of formats so that people without broadband or technology can participate. It could also include ensuring that plain English is used for forms and documents. Many respondents found the legal language of the schemes and orders used in the Measure difficult to understand. It might also be necessary to think about ways in which the requirements of the Measure to take account of the different traditions and characteristics of parishes include the needs of particular communities of interest. For example, if two closures are being considered, keep open the church which has the better physical access and facilities for people with disabilities.

A revised Mission and Pastoral Measure

Legislative reform

46. The Church of England is unusual because it is an asymmetric policy maker. In government, the health service and education for example, a central body devises policy and drives it through a series of national, regional, and local bodies. However, in the Church of England this does not happen. In Anglican ecclesiology policy is developed and delivered through a series of interlocking and inter-dependent relationships and bodies; the archbishops, the General Synod, the diocesan bishops, synods and staff teams, deanery synods, the clergy, PCCs, readers, congregations, the private patrons and patronage societies and wider communities all have a role to play. Alongside these are many other related organisations which have an interest in, and impact upon, the work of the Church. The Measure is one of the legal mechanisms for policy delivery. It provides a framework for the consultation which needs to happen, and facilitates the

necessary decision making in relation to the organisation of worship, mission and ministry, and the closure and re-use of church buildings no longer needed for public worship.

47. Many respondents took strong issue with the idea that simplifying the Measure would be helpful, and were worried that change would only result in more decisions being made which local church communities would not support, and that there would be a removal of rights and consultation. Some also felt that faster decision making would also be a way of reducing the opportunities for people to engage with the processes fully. These kind of responses highlight the need for a more people-led system which builds trust and prioritises a more pastoral approach. Given the known challenges the Church is facing in the coming decades in relation to demographic, financial and resource pressures, it is possible that the conversations held within the Measure's processes could become more complicated and more contested. Therefore, it is all the more important that the Measure promotes a more pastoral approach if possible, so it can be used to facilitate conversations in a better way.

48. The Measure should be a mechanism which allows all sides to participate in an equal conversation, and on occasion to disagree well. This is something that has become a hallmark of the Anglican approach in recent years as the Church has worked through the debates on the ordination of women and women bishops and the Living in Love and Faith conversations. There will often not be agreement on matters relating to the Measure, but the mechanism is needed to ensure that good conversations can happen, and decisions can be made together when they are needed.

49. In order to achieve that aim, a revised Measure should continue to be politically neutral. That is, it should not drive a particular view of the way the Church should further its mission. Rather, it needs to facilitate the conversations between people and communities where there will be a spectrum of views which are often in tension with one another.

50. When considering the development of a revised Measure, there are a number of legislative issues that need to be considered which are set out below.

Parish governance and related legislation

51. As part of the consultation process, GS2222 raised the question of whether or not a review of parish governance was needed. This was because there is widespread recognition that the administrative and compliance burden is weighing heavily on PCCs and volunteers. The responses included a mixed range of views, with some saying that there were already too many reviews taking place, and that it was not the right time whilst we are in the midst of the pandemic. However, some PCCs and diocesan responses agreed with each other that that the legislation needed to be reviewed and updated, including the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure (1956). Some respondents made the argument that better support for PCCs might mean there was less need to resort to church closure. Some felt this work should come ahead of any work on the MPM.

Dioceses Commission

52. The legal framework for a revised MPM could be designed in a number of ways, and there may be scope to reduce the number of separate pieces of legislation by incorporating the provisions of other Measures into the MPM. This might include the 2007 Dioceses, Pastoral and

Mission Measure (DPMM)¹⁰ which amongst other things provides for the Dioceses Commission, which oversees changes to diocesan boundaries. If there is further work on the structure of dioceses, then it will be important to ensure that there is alignment between the arrangements for any diocesan change and a revised MPM which deals with the geographical arrangements within dioceses. The current MPM does already have powers which relate to diocesan boundary changes.

The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 (PBM)

53. The Patronage and Benefice Measure is also relevant to the MPM because it deals with the way that patronage is managed and clergy are appointed to benefices, and that has an impact on the way that pastoral reorganisation is managed.

54. We know from casework that diocesan staff are under pressure when it comes to managing the Church's legal frameworks. There is a need for more training and support for clergy and officers from the National Church Institutions. Unlike the MPM, there is no national team to advise dioceses on the processes around the PBM and there is insufficient understanding in some areas. This is an area of risk, because if the legal framework becomes arcane the rights of individuals and communities are less well protected. As part of the review, new legal training programmes could be developed, and the Commissioners' pastoral team might be able to offer more support on these processes.

55. The MPM gives diocesan bishops the power to suspend appointments to a benefice in certain circumstances and to appoint a priest in charge on an indefinite basis, instead of an incumbent. This can create a tension between the diocesan bishop, patron, and PCC because it enables dioceses to pursue local change when there is no incumbent or priest in charge. This is something that has been flagged as an issue by respondents to the consultation. Communities that are in vacancy can feel vulnerable and find it harder to consider pastoral change when there is no clerical leadership to help them present the local vision for mission; it often feels like an imposed approach. The Church's own research also shows that the longer a vacancy continues where there are no clergy, the more likely the church is to decline. We know that in some cases a five-year period of suspension can get extended indefinitely. This is an area where it would be helpful to have further discussion with patrons and parishes about their experience of the current system.

56. The PBM could be changed to ensure that, after a certain period, the priest in charge is appointed as the incumbent, without the need to go through a further recruitment process, if the PCC, patrons, and others agree. This is also connected with the discussion on sequestration, as the sequestrators of the parish (the Churchwardens and Area or Rural Dean) continue to act as sequestrators when there is a priest in charge, which does not make much sense, as the parsonage is occupied and does not need the support of sequestrators. We also know that sometimes dioceses do not give the priest in charge a licence to occupy the parsonage which may lead to legal ambiguity about a number of issues relating to the property: this needs to be resolved more satisfactorily.

Governance review

57. As part of the Emerging Church programme, the recommendations of the Governance Review Group work will be debated at the February 2022 Synod. The review, if taken forward, would have implications for how the functions of the Measure are managed in future, as the

¹⁰ This Measure originally included the legislation for the mission and pastoral measure as well, but it was split off from the MPM when changes were made in 2011 and 2018.

Commissioners’ functions under the Measure could be transferred to a new ‘national services’ body. The independent role of the Commissioners’ Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee and staff team was highly valued by respondents to the consultation.

Primary and secondary legislation

58. One of the main aspects that could be changed in a revised Mission and Pastoral Measure is a division into primary and secondary legislation. Key rights could be enshrined in the primary legislation, but the detail of processes could be managed through secondary legislation which might allow for some streamlining of processes for different categories of proposal. Some respondents were concerned that splitting the legislation could be used as a kind of Trojan Horse to disadvantage people in the decision making around the Measure. GS2222 recognised that any change to the Measure would be sensitive and would need to be approached in a careful way. That is why the paper distinguished between simpler, administrative changes, which could be made more quickly, and more fundamental changes which could be made over a longer-term timeframe, as they would be more significant and need more consultation to develop.

59. The Commissioners believe that it is possible to achieve a sensible split between the balance of primary and secondary legislation, which would always be subject to the scrutiny of the General Synod. The July White Paper would need to set out very clearly the details of any such split to give reassurance that it is an appropriate approach.

Models for a revised Mission and Pastoral Measure

60. When considering a new model for the MPM it is helpful to think about the strengths and weaknesses of the current model and what is valued by those who use the system. A ‘SWOT’ analysis summarises the key points below.

Strengths

- a clear purpose to support the cure of souls and the furtherance of the mission of the church
- a well-established consultative process that gives all interested parties a voice in the processes
- independent consideration of proposals by the Church Commissioners
- strong governance through the Commissioners’ Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee
- a judicial route of appeal through the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council
- a framework that protects the needs, traditions, and characteristics of parishes and areas
- the joint relationship with the state (including funding for the Churches Conservation Trust)
- expert staff who can provide the specialist advice needed on legal and building related issues

Weaknesses

- the system can feel hierarchical and top-down
- the system can lead to inertia – top-down and bottom-up approaches failing to lead to the change needed
- the processes may not be very pastoral in nature
- the processes have to be legalistic to some degree, but this means they are not always well understood
- the processes are unnecessarily repetitive in some areas and take too long (e.g. on use seeking)
- the system is inflexible and too binary in some areas (e.g. church building closure)
- the practical implications of schemes for patterns of worship are not always fully appreciated by incumbents and interested parties
- the current system is still largely paper based and does not utilise new technology effectively
- there is not enough systematic training at all levels on the Church’s legal framework and the Measure

Opportunities

- modernising the legislation to ensure it can meet the needs of the 21st century church
- create a more pastoral approach
- enable the Church to have better quality conversations about change and make it easier to achieve that change once it is agreed

Threats

- the independence of the process is not maintained through the governance review
- tensions around traditional geographic structures and mission structures
- the funding for the Churches Conservation Trust does not increase

- move towards a “co-design, co-production” model for pastoral reorganisation
- greater use of technology in delivering the processes
- facilitate earlier intervention to avoid the decline of church buildings and poorer outcomes
- integrate work on church buildings across the NCIs
- integrate the climate change agenda into the MPM processes
- a lack of funding for church building repairs and maintenance

61. The current Measure is carefully calibrated to take account of higher and lower levels of consultation, and higher and lower levels of sensitivity. The Measure is a sophisticated piece of legislation which enables different needs to be addressed. Any revised Measure would need to continue to recognise the need for a careful approach to matters which are of greater sensitivity or potential impact and which need more extensive consultation. Reform might seek to take a more proportionate approach in areas which are of lower sensitivity, which require less extensive consultation, for example schemes which do not involve property transactions. There is a complex pattern for which legal schemes and orders are required for which action and there is scope to streamline the number of schemes and orders whilst still protecting and maintaining core rights.

62. Through the consultation responses, we heard that people would like a revised Measure to:

- be more equal – in terms of how the conversations work between different groups
- be more pastoral – by creating a system which is more user-friendly, and which prioritises relationships more
- help build trust
- take a more “co-design, co-production” approach to pastoral reorganisation
- work in different geographies – e.g. urban and rural, north and south
- give more autonomy to PCCs and local church communities
- protect the rights of consultation and representation
- protect the traditions and characteristics of parishes

Summary of responses to specific consultation questions

63. The table below summarises the responses to the questions posed in the consultation paper, with further detail provided in Annex B.

Function/area of the Measure	Initial comment
decision making and appellate functions	<p>retain a national body responsible for oversight of the Measure</p> <p>there was very little support for decision making at a diocesan level, either from diocesan staff teams or the local church, even if an independent, lay led, model was considered</p> <p>options for more local decision making could be considered</p> <p>retain the appeal function to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council</p>

schemes and orders - consultation and representation rights and rights of appeal	<p>consider options for reducing the numbers of schemes and orders</p> <p>consider using the shortened procedures (under section 17) for more matters</p> <p>simplify consultation process for pastoral schemes from 3 stages (one informal and 2 formal) to 2 stages (one informal and one formal). <i>note – the same people to be consulted, but just in fewer stages</i></p>
patronage	<p>administrative provisions for patrons who do not reply to correspondence or who cannot be found – deemed consent model</p> <p>if patron cannot be found the advowson might vest in the Patronage Board, but could be returned if the Patron then responds at a later date</p>
deanery plans	remove statutory status
cross boundary working	not seen as a priority – probably does not need legislative change at this point
parsonages	no change to current legislation to align with the Church Property Measure
financial	allow spending from the Closed Churches Building Support Account (CCBSA) before a church is closed
leasing	<p>enable a full lease of a church to another Christian denomination by faculty</p> <p>consider reducing consultation requirements on leasing where a pre-approved use and there are no changes to the building (if listed) if it is legally possible</p>
listed and unlisted buildings	retain consultation on demolition of unlisted buildings not in a conservation area, but consider a shorter procedure option
heritage advice	<p>retain advice but change where in the process advice is required, and reduce duplication</p> <p><i>note – no change to the arrangements for war memorials</i></p>
human remains	seek change to burial orders in favour of a presumption not to disturb remains
sequestration	abolish sequestration as a legal concept – an alternative system would need to ensure the critical role of the Churchwardens is retained, but resolve some of the anomalies of the current mechanism

Conclusion and next steps

63. Having published the ‘Green Paper’ (GS2222) for discussion in the July 2021 Synod, and now sharing this analysis of the consultation responses, the Commissioners will now prepare a ‘White Paper’ with actual proposals for a revised Measure for debate at the July session of General Synod. If Synod approves the programme of work, draft legislation would be prepared for the February 2023 session of Synod.

Annex A: list of organisations which responded to GS2222

Parochial Church Councils and other churches

- Aldringham, Suffolk
- Axe Valley Mission Community
- Berwick Church
- Brassingbourn Parish Church
- Bristol Church Trustees
- Broahemston PCC
- Bures PCC
- Camborne Cluster of Churches Cornwall
- Chipstable PCC
- Community of the Resurrection
- Droxford PCC and the Friends of Droxford church
- Good Shepherd, Chard, Somerset
- Goosey Parish
- Pewsey Deanery, Salisbury Diocese
- Poling Parish Church
- Titchmarsh, Peterborough
- Queen Elizabeth 1st grant and Stafford churches
- St Andrew's, Wickham Skeith, Suffolk
- St Bartholemew's, Lostwithial, Truro
- St John's Community church
- St John the Baptist Bolas Magna
- St Mary the Virgin, Bacton, Suffolk
- St Mary the Virgin, Wendens Ambo, Essex
- St Mary's Great and Little Henny, North Hinckford, Essex
- St Mary, Friston, Suffolk
- St Mary's, Kirk Fenton, York
- St Mary, Nedging, Suffolk
- St Martin's, Tuddenham, St Edmundsbury & Ipswich
- St Peter's, Chillesford, St Edmundsbury & Ipswich
- St Peter's, Merton, Norfolk
- St Peter Tavy, Tavistock, Devon
- St Peter's Tunbridge wells
- St Petrock Timberscombe PCC
- St Nicholas, Rattlesden
- St Thomas Canterbury, Greatford
- The Chase benefice

Deanery synod

- Storrington, Chichester

Clergy representative organisations

- Church of England Clergy Advocates
- English Clergy Association

Patronage societies

- Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS)
- Laing Family Trust
- Church Society
- Dean and Chapter of Bristol Cathedral
- Dean and Chapter of St Pauls
- Dean and Chapter of York Minster
- Haberdasher's Company
- Hertford College Advowson Trust
- Oriel College Oxford
- Simeon Trustees
- Hyndman Trustees
- Society for the Maintenance of Faith

Church related organisations

- British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS)
- Church Buildings Council (CBC)
- Ringing World (magazine)
- Save The Parish campaign
- Statutory Advisory Committee (SAC)
- St Paul's Whitley Bay Guild of Bellringers
- Suffolk Guild of Ringers
- The Prayer Book Society
- Worcestershire & District Change Ringing Association
- Winchester & Portsmouth Diocesan Guild of Bellringers

Building/heritage related

- Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust
- Church Architects
- Churches Conservation Trust
- Churches Trust for Cumbria
- Friends of the Friendless Churches
- Friends of Wiston Church, Suffolk
- Historic England
- National Churches Trust
- The Institute for Historic Building Conservation
- The Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies
- Norfolk Churches Trust
- Framlingham & District Historical Society
- Save Our Parsonages
- Suffolk Historical Churches Trust
- St Margaret's Trust, Suffolk
- War Memorials Trust

Diocesan responses

Formal responses we received from the following dioceses.

- Bath & Wells Diocese
- Blackburn Diocese
- Canterbury Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee
- Carlisle Diocese
- Chichester Diocese
- Coventry Diocese
- Ely Diocesan Board of Finance
- Gloucester Diocese's Church building team
- Guildford Diocesan Board of Finance
- Guildford Diocese
- Hereford Diocese
- Leeds Diocese
- Liverpool Diocese
- Salisbury Diocese's Closed Churches Committee
- Manchester Diocese
- Newcastle Diocese
- Oxford Diocese
- Peterborough Diocese
- Southall and Nottingham Diocese
- St Albans Diocese
- Worcester Diocesan DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee)
- Southwark Diocese
- York Diocese

Annex B: Summary of the responses to the consultation questions

The table below summarises the responses received to consultation questions set out in GS2222.

questions	summary of the response
<p>Q1-2 parish governance joint councils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More respondents were in favour of having a review of parish governance than against. There was general agreement that changes to the MPM should not add to the administrative burden. • Those in favour of change felt the existing legislation was too complicated and a review should be a priority because of the difficulty in recruiting PCC officers. Dioceses identified an increasing risk of PCCs not being quorate. • Those who were not in favour of a review were concerned that there were already too many reviews happening or that a review would lead to more centralisation and loss of local responsibility. • There was some support for having provision for joint councils included in pastoral schemes, but professional help and training would be needed for PCCs. The consent of the PCCs for new structures would be important. Some respondents agreed joint councils might make it easier to manage situations where an individual PCC no longer had enough officers. • The response from the Church of England Clergy Advocates said that Joint Benefice Councils had been an effective approach and supported a review. • The Church Conservation Trust (CCT) response suggested drawing on the learning from their Local Community Officers and the resources they have developed to help equip PCCs. • Historic England noted there was direct relationship between churches appearing on the Heritage at Risk register and the ability of PCCs to cope with the repair and maintenance of the buildings.
<p>Q3 controlling the future use of a church building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was consensus that controlling the future use of a church did matter, given its sacred nature and the importance of ensuring that any future use was appropriate – the ‘profane but not sordid’ concept which the Roman Catholics use was helpful. But some felt that the Anglican use was too tightly controlled and could be loosened. Some argued that the current process was cumbersome and too complicated and needed significant reform • A few commented that it would be better for a church to be demolished or left to become a ruin if it could no longer be used for worship. Many others strongly supported community uses and disposals to other Christian groups or to building trusts. • Some thought that once a church was closed then the use should be controlled only through the historic planning system. It might be sensible to link the level of control of re-use to the historical significance of the building and the types of memorials/burials. For example – where the building was unlisted the future use could be unrestricted, but the uses could be stricter when the listing was higher. There was support for having deemed consent for certain suitable uses. • Some PCCs would like to have more control over the process of re-use. • Respondents commented that the Commissioners’ covenants are useful and should be strengthened. • Historic England suggested the Church consider a wider list of possibilities for the re-use of a church building.

<p>Q4 leasing and vesting options during the use-seeking process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responses were evenly balanced in relation to leasing and vesting arrangements. Some of those against change, were being cautious because they were not sure what it might look like. • There was a lot of support for the work of existing trusts, including the CCT. Some felt that new national bodies might be answer, whilst others felt that was not appropriate and that a more local approach should be prioritised. One respondent argued that the CCT should move from being seen as the permanent destination for historic churches to being the ‘agency of change for its future’. Some respondents did not think the CCT should be given temporary ownership. One diocese suggested it would be better if there could be an accelerated process for CCT vesting. There was widespread recognition that funding would be needed to make any change possible. The CCT is piloting new approaches to maintenance services which should inform the review. • Some of the historic trusts who responded indicated they would not want to have temporary responsibility for church buildings during a use seeking period. Historic England were supportive of giving greater flexibility in terms of leasing and vesting. • The SAC¹¹ were in favour of more leasing options, rather than more vesting options and said that parish should retain a responsible role during the use-seeking period. • There was support for existing work around Church Buildings Management Partnerships and for developing the approach further. • There was support for the idea that a church should stay open during the use-seeking period. • Two dioceses wanted to see processes move more quickly and would support an increase in the number of Commissioner case officers if that would facilitate faster outcomes.
<p>Q5 simplifying financial functions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This question related to a number of possible changes to financial systems related to the MPM. There was support for the idea of simplifying arrangements. • PCCs and Patrons would like to see more proceeds from church building disposal returned to the local church, whereas dioceses wanted to see simplification, but were keener on retaining proceeds at diocesan level, and did not want the Measure to mandate what should happen to disposal proceeds. • There was a concern that simplification should not lead to parishes having less control over their assets. • A minority of respondents wanted to see an acceleration of church closure and disposal as it would reduce the financial burden on the Church. • There was support for the Commissioners using in-house lawyers more often as it would be less expensive.
<p>Q6 pastoral conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents criticised the way that the current conversations take place around the Measure. Many felt that the parish conversations were cursory and largely ignored. The diocese ‘hears’ but ‘does not listen’ and many felt the proposals were often a <i>fait accompli</i>. • The legal jargon and process was opaque and inaccessible and did not encourage confidence in the process. • The schemes do not communicate the fundamental implications of the changes to the day-to-day provision of ministry and that was a significant weakness. • Respondents wanted processes which was “early, honest, open, unbiased....transparent and continuous”.

¹¹ Statutory Advisory Committee – established under the Diocesan Pastoral & Mission Measure 2007 – membership is drawn from the Church Buildings Council and nominated by DCMS.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parishes would like help to survey their local communities – e.g. by providing templates. • Some respondents would like to see a greater use of lay convenors, to lead and facilitate conversations under the Measure, who would be independent of the diocesan structure. • The SAC was wary of the process becoming more professionalised, but thought that training for lay people as part of the process could be helpful.
<p>Q7 splitting the Measure into primary and secondary legislation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responses were evenly balanced between yes and no on the question of dividing the legislation. Those in favour would be supportive if sufficient safeguards were put in place to ensure Synod oversight. Those against were concerned that the legislation could be used to disadvantage PCCs and the local community. • The rights of individuals in the processes should be retained in the primary legislation. • The patronage societies did not comment much on this question. One society did support the idea as long as there was sufficient scrutiny and consultation on changes to the secondary rules and processes. • The Church of England Clergy Advocates were supportive as long as there was good oversight mechanisms for the secondary legislation. • The CCT supported the division. • The SAC was supportive of an incremental approach to reforming the Measure.
<p>Q8 decision-making and appellate functions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high proportion of respondents from all parts of the church (parishes, dioceses, and patrons) felt that the existing system worked well and did not need to be altered – that is the Commissioners dealing with contested schemes and a route of appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in some matters. Most were opposed to contested matters being adjudicated on at diocesan level. • Those who considered other options, suggested that it might be more appropriate to have more decision making at a parish or deanery level. • There were some diocesan and patron responses which were supportive of the Bishops and diocesan teams having a greater role in the decision making on contested schemes. However, most of the diocesan staff teams did not feel it would be appropriate to do that, even if an independent and lay led structure were to be considered which would be separate to the Bishop’s Council. • If any changes were to be considered they would need to distinguish where assets were involved, as the potential conflicts of interest are more substantive. • The Church of England Clergy Advocates and the CCT were supportive of retaining the Commissioners’ role. • There is widespread support for having better data systems to support the processes.
<p>Q9 changes to Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committees (DMPCs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a range of responses on the value and utility of DMPCs and Area DMPCs from those who think they work well did not see that any particular changes were needed, to those who thought they lacked ‘teeth’ and should be abolished. • Culturally they work well when they are perceived to be serving the local community and not imposing an agenda. • Some were against the idea of the DMPC being part of the Bishop’s Council, and thought there could be a conflict of interest. Others felt that it did work well where the DMPC was a sub-committee of the Council, because this enabled sufficient time to be given to proposals. The Church of England Clergy Advocates said that many clergy and laity would prefer the DMPC to be separate from the Bishop’s Council. • The importance of the senior diocesan officers being present for the discussions was noted by many.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some dioceses thought the responsibilities of the DMPCs could be delegated more formally to suffragans, and archdeacons. • Others thought that the parish dimension could be strengthened by encouraging local representation on the DMPC. The CBC response suggested that it might be helpful to include representation from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) to make better links in relation to listed church buildings.
<p>Q10 reducing the number of legal schemes and orders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responses to this question were fairly evenly balanced, but more people were in favour of reducing the number of schemes and orders, than against. However, respondents were keen to ensure that any simplification in this respect did not disadvantage the parishes because of a “diocesan or central whimsy” or reduce the rights of consultation. • The principle of having schemes and orders was supported, but many felt that there were too many kinds of legal instrument. Although a lot of individual respondents did not want to see processes speeded up if they were going to be disadvantaged in the decision making, there were others who thought that the change process did take too long, which was not conducive to church vitality and mission. • There was support for having most of the processes work through schemes, in order to protect the rights of individuals. • Dioceses were supportive of reducing the number of instruments as it led to confusion and delays. Many emphasised the importance of the informal consultation stages (pre-Measure), but thought the formal consultation (under the Measure) could be reduced from 2 stages to one. • The Church of England Clergy Advocates and the SAC were supportive of streamlining the number of schemes and orders.
<p>Q11 flexibility for the Commissioners to amend schemes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the diocesan responses were in favour of the Commissioners being able to correct minor matters, particularly if would mean that dioceses did not need to re-run processes which would be time consuming, but there was little support for the Commissioners being given scope in other matters.
<p>Q12 deanery plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a spectrum of response ranging from those dioceses where the deanery is not a working mission unit, through to dioceses who have found the planning process useful, encouraging better pastoral planning. Some felt there was a lot of confusion around the concept, which was not always helpful. • The main benefit for some was that local people were encouraged to be involved in the planning and take ownership of putting it into action. It could be a good way of having pastoral conversations. • However, there was recognition that the capacity for doing planning varies and some communities do not have the capacity to engage with the planning process. • The disadvantage of having a statutory plan was that it lacked flexibility and meant it was harder for communities to adapt the plan when changes happened. They could date quickly. • There were some who felt that the statutory status of the plans should remain, as they gave added weight to the decision making on contested schemes. • There were others, who agreed that the statutory status had not worked in the way expected and needed to be rescinded. One commented that “Deanery planning is useful exercise, but linking it to statutory processes make it overly complex.” • The Church of England Clergy Advocates suggested that more responsibility could be given to Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees in overseeing the development of parishes and clergy deployment. Dioceses could take more notice

	of the views of Deanery MPCs as they represented the interests of the parishes in the deanery.
<p>Q13 cross boundary working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents gave a range of views both for and against more cross boundary working, but overall, this was not seen as a major priority and there was little appetite for significant change in this area. • The importance of informal cooperation and joint conversations was flagged, particularly where there might be border parish issues that were relevant to two dioceses. • The experience of cross boundary working on the Olympic site in 2012 was cited by one respondent as an example where complex arrangements were not helpful. • Ideas that were suggested including cross-licencing clergy across boundaries, but clergy respondents did not think that would work well in terms of ecclesiology and practical issues like safeguarding.
<p>Q14 Church Buildings Council Reports</p> <p>The consultation asked a question about whether or not CBC reports should be required where church building closure was being considered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This question attracted a lot of responses and there was a wide spectrum of opinion. There was general agreement that heritage advice, both on the historical significance of a church building, but also the contents, was needed, but different views about who should provide it and when it should be requested as part of the processes. There was general agreement that the secular planning system did not have sufficient resources or knowledge to provide the specialist advice the Church needs. • Those who valued the reports were positive about the national perspective that the CBC could provide, felt the reports were independent, and were helpful. One diocesan response mentioned that they were helpful for potential buyers of a church building, as it gave the buyer a good understanding of the heritage/historic issues. • Some respondents suggested that a wider group of people be involved in producing advice, partly to relieve national resource pressures. For example, Diocesan Advisory Committees (DAC) could be involved where there was sufficient expertise. • Those who did not feel the advice was helpful said that they already had access to heritage information from the Church Historical Record, and that a lot of the information in the report came from the local church, so the report did not always add that much to what they already knew. The delays in producing reports were an issue highlighted in the majority of the diocesan responses. There was support for exploring better ways to use the Church Historical Record. • Respondents had varying views on the degree to which the historic status of the church should be a factor in the decision to close, which is currently based on an assessment of pastoral need. Some felt that the historic status of the church was not the driving or significant factor in closure decisions, but for others it was an important part of the context that needed to be considered. Other said that the report came too late to influence the pastoral discussions around closure. • Some, including the CCT, suggested that the report was not needed for closure, but was needed at the point where alternative uses were being considered. One of the patronage societies supported this idea. Some respondents also suggested limiting the requirements to the most highly listed building only – Grade I and 2*. • There was support for the Church Buildings Council’s work with struggling churches and one respondent suggested this should be the focus of future work, with less emphasis being placed on the requirements to produce reports. • The CBC and the Statutory Advisory Committee both submitted formal responses to the review which were helpful. The CBC response accepted that the delays in the production of the reports did cause frustration and steps have been taken to speed the process up. They do not want to see the requirement to produce reports removed, but they did support the ideas presented in GS2222 for changing the use-

	<p>seeking timing, which might offer scope for a different approach. The SAC emphasised the importance of the report but agreed there could be scope to look at the order of the processes. Historic England agreed that advice was needed and thought the ‘Statement of Significance’ model was useful in this context.</p>
<p>Q15 Interim church status between ‘open’ or ‘closed’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a high number of responses to this question and opinion was broadly balanced for and against. • Those who were against were concerned that it would become a <i>de facto</i> first step towards church building closure, would make closure more likely, and would leave the church community in a form of limbo that was undesirable. Some thought this would only over complicate what were already difficult matters. One respondent quoted the ‘Schrodinger cat’ experiment where a cat can be perceived as being both ‘alive’ and ‘dead’ at the same time – not helpful for a church building to be in that situation. Diocesan teams, as well as individuals objected to the idea, and were concerned that it would be difficult to get grants to support churches in an interim status. • Those that supported the idea felt that it could be helpful pastorally to give a community time to consider the future options and best use of the building. One comment suggested that the halfway house status had attractions if it gave more time to secure a better outcome than permanent closure. Another respondent quoted the work the CCT have done with open churches which helped them to avoid closure as showing how additional support could help in such a period. The CCT is supportive of a more flexible approach. Others thought the Chapel of Ease designation already provided the kind of interim status being considered. Some of the historic building trusts who responded were supportive of exploring a less binary system, but were not keen on temporary vesting. Historic England were also supportive of this approach as it helped avoid closure, but there would need to be clarity about the building’s status and what was required in terms of the ecclesiastical exemption. • The dioceses who were more supportive of the idea thought that a more flexible approach could be useful and suggested the status of ‘open but use-seeking’ and ‘closed but in use’ would give more options. There were also questions about what the governance and accountability structure would be in such a model. There could be a number of options for ownership and/or control of the church buildings which could be considered. Any models would also need to consider options around patterns of worship/rites of passage and the relationship to the faculty system. One respondent suggested a fast-track process could be considered where someone was interested in acquiring a building prior to closure and was already involved with initiatives to look after the building. • The SAC did not consider that an alternative status was required, but did like the idea of a church being able to consider a variety of options for its future – i.e. “open but in diverse use”. • The Festival Church model was mentioned by many respondents as an example of where more flexible approaches were being tried. Some did not feel it would be helpful to have a formal designation for Festival Churches. • Some were in favour of making sure an interim period was time limited, or that parishes could be given a licence to experiment on a temporary basis, to ensure that decisions were then made about options. • Some dioceses would like to replicate the Norwich Diocesan Churches Trust model which was referenced in GS2222 and is a relatively recent initiative if it was successful. • The technical issue of the DBF having to have an insurable interest in the Church building, through a lease of a small part of the building, was something that needed to be changed.

<p>Q16 CCBSA spend pre closure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CCBSA is the Closed Churches Buildings Support Account. This was a technical question about when the funds can be spent and there was broad support from those who answered that it would be helpful to have access to funds earlier in the use-seeking process. This was supported by Historic England, the SAC, CCT, and other trust bodies.
<p>Q17 use-seeking and planning processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The question asked if closed churches in the use-seeking period should continue to be subject to the faculty system. Strong views were expressed on this question, whether in favour or against. • Those in favour, felt that it would be better to have one, rather than two legal processes, and the secular planning system was often more responsive to community needs. Diocesan responses made the point that faculty jurisdiction should be exhausted upon closure because faculty should only apply where the purpose of the building was the mission of the church. However, there was a lot of agreement that faculty should apply if the church building was still open but in a use-seeking period. Many were supportive of having secular engagement in the processes around closure and disposal. • Those against felt it was important that the church continued to have a strong level of engagement on the decision making on the future use of the building. Some argued that the secular planning system was not well equipped to take account of the pastoral nature of decisions around the building and the churchyard. The SAC strongly favoured faculty jurisdiction continuing in the use-seeking period, whereas the CCT took the opposite view. • The issue of consecration was raised. Many argued that as long as the building remained consecrated it should remain subject to faculty. One respondent suggested that approach to consecration should be re-considered. • There are technical issues which need to be considered if there was any change in this area, particularly relating to open graveyards, which will always be a particularly sensitive issue. • There were some interesting ideas put forward. One diocese suggested it might be better to have a status like that of licensed buildings where the bishop could determine whether the church should continue to be subject to faculty. This would mean it could continue as long as that made sense in the local situation but give greater flexibility. • Another suggested it would be helpful to give more thought to how the movement and disposal of church building contents could be managed better after closure, and before disposal. Greater flexibility might give more scope for the proactive re-housing of objects like bells and organs. There could be scope to make more use of the Bishop's Directions in these matters. • The Institute of Historic Building Conservation made a point that it was not in support of parallel marketing in the use seeking period. When this happened with redundant farm buildings it almost always led to proposals for residential, rather than employment use. • The SAC raised a technical issue about the relationship between the MPM and the faculty jurisdiction in relation to cases where a church is demolished and a new one built which will be considered further.
<p>Q18 consultation on unlisted churches not in a conservation area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority were strongly in favour of consultation on closure continuing where a church is not listed and is not in a conservation area. • Those in favour felt that consultation should consider a range of factors, not just whether or not the building was historically significant, and it was important that communities got to have a say about closure and future proposals. Many dioceses supported this position. A building might be highly valued by the local community, even if its historical significance was not high. There was agreement that

	<p>consultation was particularly important if there were graveyard or burials to be considered. The SAC, CCT and Historic England felt consultation should continue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who wanted to see change suggested that a light touch approach could be considered for those buildings, which would bring the Church of England more in line with other denominations. One PCC was not in favour of consultation continuing on unlisted churches.
<p>Q19 diocesan powers to repair church buildings in use (emergency provision)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was little support for this idea from parishes and from diocesan teams. One respondent argued that the existing provision in the MPM which allow dioceses to use funds from the Diocesan Pastoral Account for the repair and improvement of church buildings was sufficient. Many thought it would unhelpfully blur the lines of responsibility between parish and dioceses and that would not be welcome. It was also hard to see how it could work well in practice. There was also agreement that people want to see more money spent on open churches and keeping them open, than on closed churches in order to facilitate disposal. There were wider comments about the power to repair not being the issue – it’s the lack of funding at all levels in the church, and in some cases a lack of skills and capacity that are the issues which need addressing. • Historic England commented that it was easier to boost capacity at diocesan level in this respect, but also mentioned the lack of funding to support such an approach.
<p>Q20 consultation on leasing closed church buildings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was general agreement in the responses to this question that consultation was needed when leasing closed churches to ensure that the use was supported by the local community, and would work in a practical sense. However, there could be scope for a lighter touch process by having a deemed consent type model with an approved list of uses where there would be not alterations to the building, and the lease was relatively short term. More consultation would be required if the use was not on the list and/or required alterations, and for longer leases. Historic England would be nervous about leases which would require a change of use in planning terms, or which would require changes to the building. • The SAC suggested the lease arrangement for CCT churches could be a useful model to consider. • Diocesan teams said it would be helpful to be able to lease the whole church to another denomination during the use-seeking period, as it would still be used primarily as a place of worship (a requirement of the ecclesiastical exemption). • The importance of enforceable covenants was emphasised by some respondents.
<p>Q21 SAC advice</p> <p>The SAC is the Statutory Advisory and advises the Commissioners on potential vestings to the Church Conservation Trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were many responses in favour of retaining the SAC advice to the Commissioners, and this was a point that was made strongly by the various heritage organisations and historic building trusts that responded to the consultation. There were some individual respondents who felt the system should be simplified and that it was not necessary to have particular provision in terms of SAC. • There was a lot of support for retaining early SAC advice on CCT vestings, but diocesan teams felt that ‘final advice’ was an unnecessary duplication of process and that the consultation on plans should be the remit of the secular/heritage planning processes. There were suggestions that the SAC role could be limited to Grade I and 2* buildings only, in line with the way Heritage England work. The Churches Conservation Trust wanted to have a greater role in the assessment of what should be vested in the Trust and were interested in exploring changes to the current process. • Historic England supported the view that the SAC early advice was critical, but that SAC did not need to be consulted on plans once planning permission and Listed Building Consent had been granted.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SAC response highlighted the nature of the Church-State settlement and its unique role to advise whilst keeping both interests in balance. The SAC felt the advice on Last Resort Vesting was important. The CBC argued changes to the SAC should be avoided which might erode public confidence in the Church’s custodian role.
<p>Q22 aligning consultation with the secular planning system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were a range of responses to this question. Some felt that the “status quo was clunky but effective” and there were many who were complimentary about the role of Historic England (HE). Some diocesan teams said they had positive relationships with HE and found that early engagement with them was effective. Their role in providing independent advice was valued. HE said that they should continue to be consulted on the closure of all church buildings. Those in favour of aligning the closed church processes with the HE system included diocesan teams, a patronage body and a few PCCs. But there were others who did not support changing the requirements. However, there could be tensions between the requirements of HE and the mission of the church and the needs of the parish. One example was quoted where a historic peal of bells was not allowed to be removed from a closed church because of their heritage value. As a result the bells could no longer be rung or seen, which was seen as a negative outcome by the bellringing community.
<p>Q23 Ministry of Justice burial orders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was strong agreement across all respondents of the importance and sensitivity of the processes relating to burials and human remains. The Christian theology of permanent burial is a key principle in these matters. Diocesan teams were concerned that the rights of families and parishioners should be protected. The organisations responding all recognise the current complexity in burial law and practice is an issue for the Church. One diocese suggested that there is a tension in current policy which discourages individual exhumations. They suggested that if churchyards are going to be re-purposed without removing human remains then perhaps consideration should be given to having a clearer right for families to exhume and re-bury elsewhere. This was common practice in the past. One respondent suggested that conservation principles could be embedded more deeply in Ministry of Justice guidance. An individual respondent flagged issues around the treatment of funerary monuments, which belong to descendants and not the church. The War Memorials Trust submission emphasised the need to retain specific arrangements for war memorials. (No change is planned in this matter).
<p>Q24 parsonage matters</p> <p>This was a technical question about aligning MPM with the Church Property Measure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was an issue where the PCCs and individual responses were very clearly against any change, but the diocesan teams and some of the patronage societies were in favour. Those in favour thought that consultation on the parsonage could be limited to the statutory interested parties, or even just the PCCs and clergy, but those against thought the local community should still have a right to comment of proposals for disposal. In some cases the house will have originally been purchased by the local community and they therefore retained an interest. Some wanted to see a greater use of leasing to avoid the need to sell. The response from the English Clergy Association was also against any changes to the current system and regretted that so many parsonages have been sold. Historic England noted they have an interest in the demolition of listed parsonages.

<p>Q25 rights of representation</p>	<p>Rights of representation was one of the most sensitive areas of the consultation. The paper set out 5 options for discussion which could be considered as part of any changes to the legal schemes and orders. The options were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Option 1 – limit the right to make representations on schemes and orders to the statutory interested parties - Option 2 – limit the rights to make representations on schemes and orders interested parties and people on the electoral role - Option 3 – allow anyone to comment but give greater weighting to comments from interested parties and the congregation/electoral role members - Option 4 – have a general duty to consult the public on the provision of ministry - Option 5 – allow representations from everyone as now, but limit the right of appeal to interested parties only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of individual responses were very strongly against any changes to representation rights. For example one respondent said that whilst non-interested parties hardly ever intervene the church community would like to encourage their engagement, so the Measure should not make that harder. • Four patrons answered this questions and all emphasised the need for patrons to retain their status as an ‘interested party’. • Most of the PCCs who responded to this question were against limiting representation rights, though one PCC did say a conditional yes to the answer, recognising that the interested parties would vary depending on the scheme or order under discussion. • There were respondents who thought that there was a case for change saying that people should have a right to comment, but not to dictate, what happens to a church building if they have no engagement with the church community. • The majority of respondents did not support options 1,2 and 4 but there was support amongst some for Option 3, which would give greater weighting to some respondents, and Option 5, limited the right of appeal to interested parties. • The diocesan responses all recognised the sensitivity of the issue, but their preferences varied. 6 dioceses preferred option 5, two dioceses favoured option 3 and one favoured option 4 or 5. • Those who favoured Option 5 felt it gave the right balance in terms of everyone’s voice being heard, but only allowing those involved in the day-to-day running of the parish to overturn a scheme. Some liked Option 3 because everyone could comment, but there was greater weighting to the church community’s view which would be helpful. There was some suggestion that some matters, such as a union of parishes, should not require consultation beyond the church family. • One diocese supported Option 2 and thought that non-Church goers could join the electoral role if they wished to participate. (Note – that does require attendance). • Historic England were supportive of Option 5, which allowed representations from everyone but limited the right of appeal.
<p>Q26-27 clergy dispossession</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These were questions where we had more comments from clergy and diocesan teams and fewer from PCCs. • A majority of respondents did not want to see dispossession happen at all. • Otherwise, there was support for the existing system and those who think that the Commissioners’ Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee and the appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) provide sufficient protection for clergy. • Some people did want to see better pastoral care provision for clergy and thought that more use could be made of formal mediation. However, one respondent commented that the clergy were not sure a personal route of appeal would work.

	<p>One commenter said that dispute resolution processes are often sold as a cheap and fair alternative, but it was often not the case in practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One respondent suggested that it would be better to think about structural solutions, like a greater use of fixed term contracts, to manage expectations more easily. • The PCC responses suggested the Church should learn from secular examples like the civil service, BT, and the NHS. • Diocesan teams thought that if a separate appeals mechanism is developed then it would probably not be necessary to retain the appeal route to the JCPC. • Most respondents wanted to see the JCPC appeal route retained if the system remained the same.
<p>Q28 patronage - simplifying the provision for the suspension and restriction of presentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had a range of comments to the questions on patronage mainly from private patrons and patronage societies, from dioceses, and individuals. • The patrons who responded seemed to be nearly all in favour of a simpler procedure for suspension or restriction. One said a meeting with the PCCs should be part of the suspension/restriction process. • The dioceses unanimously supported the idea of a single process for suspension/presentation (comments suggest that some see this as the means of managing situations where the patron is non-responsive). • The English Clergy Association were very supportive of the role patrons play in the life of the Church. The Church of England Clergy Advocates commented that suspension was being used far more widely than necessary as dioceses often suspend livings and renew suspensions without plans for pastoral reorganisation being in place. They would like to see a clear and more precise definition of why a patron's right to nominate office holders during a vacancy has been suspended, and were concerned about posts where suspension has been renewed 3 or 4 times, lasting 15-20 years.
<p>Q29 patronage – patronage boards in new benefices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The suggestion was that a pastoral scheme could mandate the future patronage board arrangements as part of the scheme, and that these could be simpler than current arrangements. • Those who support this regard it as a sensible option for simplifying patronage in multi-parish benefices although some of these say the bishop should not be a member or the diocese should not be over-represented. • Some patrons support this idea, but most thought that board should be optional, not mandatory. • Dioceses were fairly evenly divided on this question. Those against mostly thought that this would reduce a desirable flexibility and that patronage boards should only be an option. A couple thought Boards unwieldy and preferred joint patronage. There were varying views on whether the Bishop should be the patron for all new benefices.
<p>Q30 patronage – consent to changes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the current MPM there are anomalies in the different schemes and orders for when written consent is needed from patrons to certain changes. There could be scope to harmonise the arrangements so that they are consistent across the Measure without removing any of the patron's rights of representation. Provision needs to be made for situations where patrons do not respond to diocesan requests for approval, or cannot be found. • Those who were against changes were concerned that patrons' rights of representation might be reduced. • Diocesan responses were broadly two to one in favour of the suggestion. They would welcome the opportunity to alter the patronage where patrons are inactive.

Q31 sequestration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The responses were evenly balanced in relation to whether or not sequestration should be abolished. Those in favour of abolishing said that it was the legal language and concepts that were unhelpful – some said outmoded or archaic. But there was general agreement that a system is needed to ensure that there are arrangements for the diocesan teams to work with the Churchwardens and parish during a vacancy. It was noted that managing the organisation of services was often more onerous than the responsibilities around the parsonages and should be reflected more formally, for example in the canons.• There are anomalies that need to be resolved when a Priest-in-Charge is occupying a parsonage and who is legally responsible for dealing with boundary issues with neighbours or in relation to the churchyard. The sequestrators remain technically responsible for parsonages in this situation.• It was also noted that some benefices have property vested in them which are not parsonages.• There would be support for a more modern approach to dealing with the coordination needed during vacancy and scope to clarify the legal responsibilities in relation to different kinds of office holders.
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Annex C: Review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure

This section summarises the work completed to date by the Pastoral and Closed Churches team on the review of the MPM.

Data and evidence gathering

- a detailed team review of the Measure's processes
- an analysis of casework decisions considered by the Commissioners over the last 10 years
- in-house research on the reasons for the closure of church buildings and the re-use of church buildings
- a literature review of previous reviews of the Measure
- a literature review of academic journals

Engagement and consultation

Clergy

- the chairs of the House of Clergy in Diocesan Synods
- network meetings with Archdeacons.
- the Church of England Clergy Advocates (CECA)
- individual clergy who engage with the online Sheldon Hub

Dioceses

- The Diocesan Secretaries Liaison Group
- Inter-Diocesan Finance Forum which includes DBF Chairs
- Diocesan staff teams who are responsible for the Measure's processes
- Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committees
- Diocese of Exeter Rural Church project

National Church Institution teams and other national bodies

- Legal Office
- Clergy HR and Ministry
- Mission and Public Affairs (including rural)
- Vision and Strategy
- Finance

- The Strategic Church Buildings Support Group
- Statutory Advisory Committee (SAC)
- The Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee (RACSC) and the Standing Committees of the House of Clergy and the House of Laity
- The Liturgical Commission

Church building related

- Churches Conservation Trust board
- The Victorian Society
- The Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies
- The Institute for Historic Building Conservation

Government departments

- Cabinet Office (crown patronage)
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
- Ministry of Justice (graveyard and burial issues)

University of Oxford knowledge partnership project

Clergy and lay people from England and Wales, ecumenical partners, and international representatives from the USA, South Africa and Israel and Europe.