Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee

Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011

Benefice of Upper Kennet

(Diocese of Salisbury)

Note by Matthew Crowe

Summary

(i) The draft Pastoral Scheme providing for the union of the parishes of Avebury; Broad Hinton; Overton and Fyfield with East Kennett; Winterbourne Bassett; and Winterbourne Monkton with Berwick Basset, which are the five parishes comprising the area of the benefice of Upper Kennet, received two representations against the draft Scheme, and two in favour.

(ii) The representors against the draft Scheme, who are from the parish of Overton and Fyfield with East Kennett, say that there are no clear benefits from uniting the five parishes particularly for their own parish which they say should remain separate. They also have concerns about the size of the PCC for the united parish and whether their parish, which had three churches, would be adequately represented on it by comparison with the other current parishes which have only one church each. They also think there might be an adverse effect on fund-raising by having a single parish.

(iii) The two representations in favour, including one from the incumbent, set out the extensive local consultation process and identified the benefits of the united parish for the benefice as a whole.

(iv) The Bishop of Ramsbury points out that the initiative for the reorganisation came from the incumbent and existing PCCs, which were all in favour of it and that the benefits were those identified by the incumbent. He did not think there would be an adverse effect on fund-raising as it was intended that there would be Local Church Committees for this. He would work with the incumbent to agree a fair representation for each church community on the new PCC.

The sifting groups’ decision

(v) The case has been examined by the Committee’s case sifting representatives who recommended that the matter should not be afforded a public hearing as the issues were clear from the correspondence and they did not think the Committee would gain additional information or that a hearing was necessary for reasons of fairness.

Issues for the Committee
(vi) Do the benefits identified by the Incumbent justify the proposed union of parishes?
(vii) Would the current parish of Overton with Fyfield and East Kennett have adequate representation on the PCC of the proposed new parish?
(viii) Is uniting the parishes likely to have an adverse effect on fund raising?
(ix) Should Overton with Fyfield and East Kennett be excluded from the union of parishes?
(x) Would the draft scheme further the mission of the Church of England and make better provision for the cure of souls in the diocese?

Recommendation
(xi) The Committee is invited to consider the representations and the issues set out in this report and whether the draft Scheme should proceed.

Background

1. The draft Pastoral Scheme providing for the union of the parishes of Avebury; Broad Hinton; Overton and Fyfield with East Kennett; Winterbourne Bassett; and Winterbourne Monkton with Berwick Basset, which are the five parishes comprising the area of the benefice of Upper Kennet, received two representations against the draft Scheme, and two in favour.

2. The draft Scheme carried the following diocesan rationale:

   “The proposed union of these five parishes was initiated by the benefice to enable them to function more effectively in the future in furthering the mission and ministry of the local Church. It is supported by the Archdeacon and DMPC.”

3. Attached are:
   Annex A: A copy of the draft Pastoral Scheme;
   Annex B: A scaled map of the area;
   Annex C: A copy of the letter referring the representations to the Bishop of Salisbury together with the Bishop of Ramsbury’s response on the diocesan Bishop’s behalf.
   Annex D: Parish information forms for the parishes;
   Annex R: Copies of the representations;
Annex S: Supplementary comments received from the representors; the Bishop did not add anything further.

Summary of representations in against the draft scheme

4. The representations against come from Graham Kitchen and Vicky Evans, both from the parish of Overton and Fyfield with East Kennett.

5. Both representors question the rationale and motivation behind the proposals – believing their existing parish to be working well. Mr Kitchen says that, although he has asked many times, he has yet to receive a satisfactory response to what advantages to the benefice being a single PCC would be. Both say that the benefice is geographically divided by the A4 between their parish to the south and the other four parishes to the north and suggest a more suitable proposal would be for those parishes to the north of the A4 to unite and have a benefice of two parishes. They also understand that it is intended that the five existing parishes would have equal representation on the new PCC and think this would be unfair on their parish which has three churches while the others have only one. They are especially concerned that this would adversely affect St Nicholas Fyfield which is a chapel of ease.

6. Mr Kitchen stresses that it is easier to engage the local community if they feel connected to their local church, and people prefer knowing that the donations or efforts are focussed in their area rather than the wider benefice. He also queries whether the financial arrangements of a single parish would be simpler and whether finding a treasurer would be easy.

7. Vicky Evans is concerned about the size of a single PCC and thinks that it will need to have long meetings and that discussion of issues will become watered down as members will be less interested in matters which don’t relate to their own church. She also stresses the importance of volunteer work in the parish and each helping another but says that to include more churches and continue working as they have been would not be possible.

Summary of the representations in favour

8. The representations in favour come from Penny Gold (a churchwarden in Winterbourne Monkton with Berwick Bassett) and the Reverend Maria Shepherdson.

9. Both say that these proposals have arisen from extensive work over a very long period of time and Mrs Shepherdson sets out the details of the process. She lists the advantages of having a single parish as

   - A simplified benefice freeing up the rector and lay ministers for more mission ministry and outreach;
   - Overcoming the lack of church officers;
   - Safeguarding the future of individual churches by allowing those who do not wish to be PCC members to serve on Local Church Councils;
   - Making the benefice more attractive to future incumbents.
10. Penny Gold believes that concerns over finances can be managed by appropriate safeguards, equal representation, restricted funds, and trust between PCC members.

**The Bishop’s response**

11. Following normal practice, copies of the representations were sent to the Bishop to seek his view on the objections. The Bishop of Ramsbury was asked by the Bishop of Salisbury to respond.

12. The Bishop sets out the wider context of governance in the diocese, and how the Bishop’s staff have encouraged multi-parish rural benefices to consider the most appropriate form of governance for the Church in their own particular contexts. This has resulted in a variegated map of some large parishes covering a number of communities, and some where they have retained individual PCCs. The Bishop expresses no preference for either course of action and emphasises that these proposals have not been driven from the diocesan level, but rather that support has been given to the incumbent to discern the appropriate provision for this benefice.

13. He endorses the reasons given in the Reverend Maria Shepherdson’s representations as those which commend the Scheme and also weigh against the two-parish option. The Bishop says that during the consultation and discernment about these proposals over the past several years, an option of having two parishes rather than one was considered, and a single parish was endorsed overwhelmingly by all five PCCs.

14. The Bishop does not believe that local fundraising should be impaired by the parishes uniting. He notes that the individual churches could set up “Friends” Groups and Local Church Committees for local fund-raising. He also expects to carry out the provision in the draft Scheme for the representation of each church community on the new PCC to be invoked and would discuss with the incumbent how best to do this in a way which is fair to the existing parishes.

15. The Bishop says that the incumbent is an able, caring incumbent and the DMPC and Bishops support her pursuit for greater unity in governance.

**Supplementary views of the representors**

16. The Reverend Maria Shepherdson wrote further following the Bishop’s response. She thanked the Bishop for reasserting that the Diocese had not driven the process of this reorganisation. For her further comments she has consulted with her Working Group on this reorganisation proposal.

17. Mrs Shepherdson says that while some of the content of the objections is expected, some of it is factually inaccurate. She points out that Saint Nicholas, Fyfield is a chapel of ease, and as such does not formally have a church warden, though Ms Evans has long been known as the warden as a mark of respect. Mrs Shepherdson also says that Ms Evans suggestion that the proposals were predetermined is an unfair representation of the consultative journey the parishes have been on for several years.
18. She also says that there have been in-depth discussions, at PCC meetings, amongst the Working Group and also individually with both the representors, about how the PCC of a single parish might be constituted in terms of numbers. She expects the PCC of the new parish to have 4-6 lay members and says that there are relatively few communicants available to participate actively on a PCC.

Supplementary response from the Bishop

19. The Bishop had nothing to add to his previous response.

Issues for the Committee

(i) Do the benefits identified by the Incumbent justify the proposed union of parishes?

(ii) Would the current parish of Overton with Fyfield and East Kennett have adequate representation on the PCC of the proposed new parish?

(iii) Is uniting the parishes likely to have an adverse effect on fund raising?

(iv) Should Overton with Fyfield and East Kennett be excluded from the union of parishes?

(v) Would the draft scheme further the mission of the Church of England and make better provision for the cure of souls in the diocese?

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to consider the representations and the issues set out in this report and whether the draft Scheme should proceed.

Matthew Crowe
Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ

18 July 2023
SUMMARY OF MAIN PROVISIONS OF DRAFT SCHEME (NOT PART OF THE DRAFT SCHEME)

This draft Scheme provides for the union of the parish of Avebury, the parish of Broad Hinton, the parish of Overton and Fyfield with East Kennet, the parish of Winterbourne Bassett and the parish of Winterbourne Monkton with Berwick Bassett, being the parishes which comprise the area of the benefice of Upper Kennet in the diocese of Salisbury and for all the parish churches of those parishes to be parish churches of the new parish.

DRAFT

PASTORAL SCHEME

This Scheme is made by the Church Commissioners this day of 2023 in pursuance of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, the Right Reverend Stephen, Bishop of Salisbury, having consented thereto.

Union of parishes
1. The parish of Avebury, the parish of Broad Hinton, the parish of Overton and Fyfield with East Kennet, the parish of Winterbourne Bassett and the parish of Winterbourne Monkton with Berwick Basset, being the five parishes which comprise the area of the benefice of Upper Kennet in the diocese of Salisbury, shall be united to create a new parish which shall be named "The Parish of Upper Kennet".

Parish churches
2. All the parish churches of the parishes referred to in clause 1 hereof shall be parish churches of the new parish.

Archdeaconry and deanery
3. The new parish shall belong to the archdeaconry of Wilts and the deanery of Marlborough.

Assistant curates: consequential provision
4. If immediately before this Scheme comes into operation any person holds an office of assistant curate (however described) in any of the parishes referred to in clause 1 hereof he, she or they shall as consequence of the union of parishes effected by the Scheme hold such office or offices subject to the same terms of service in the new parish of Upper Kennet.

Representation of the laity
5. The Bishop may by Instrument under his hand make provision for ensuring that the congregation of every church or place of worship in the new parish will have its own elected representatives of the laity on the parochial church council of the new parish.

Coming into operation of this Scheme
6. This Scheme shall come into operation upon the first day of the month following the date of it being made by the Church Commissioners.
In witness of which this Scheme has been duly executed as a deed by the Church Commissioners.

SIGNED by the Right Reverend Stephen, Bishop of Salisbury.

Executed as a Deed by the Church Commissioners for England acting by two authorised signatories:

-------------------------------------------------
Signature of Authorised Signatory
-------------------------------------------------
Signature of Authorised Signatory

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

The rationale behind the diocesan proposals is as follows:

The proposed union of these five parishes was initiated by the benefice to enable them to function more effectively in the future in furthering the mission and ministry of the local Church. It is supported by the Archdeacon and DMPC.

Publication of this draft Scheme has been approved by the Church Commissioners but does not mean that they have taken a view on the merits of the diocesan case.

If they receive representations against the draft Scheme, they will send all representations, both for and against, to the Bishop and ask for his views. Individual representors will then receive copies of their correspondence with the Bishop (including copies of all the representations) and they may comment further
in writing to the Commissioners on the issues raised in their original letter in light of the diocesan response if they so wish.

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

Clause 4

This clause has been included to ensure that any person holding an office of assistant curate (however described) shall as consequence of the union of the parishes effected by the Scheme hold such office or offices subject to the same terms of service in the new parish of Upper Kennet. Although there is currently no such unnamed office holder in post, this clause is included in case any such office holder is appointed before this Scheme comes into operation.

Clause 5

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

Churches

The church of Saint Nicholas, Fyfield, is a chapel of ease in the parish of Overton and Fyfield with East Kennett will continue as a chapel of ease in the new parish of Upper Kennet.
Dear Bishop,

**Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011**  
**Benefice of Upper Kennet**  
**Proposed Pastoral Scheme**

Following the publication of the draft scheme providing for the union of the parishes of Avebury; Broad Hinton; Overton and Fyfield with East Kennett; Winterbourne Bassett; and Winterbourne Monkton with Berwick Basset, which are the five parishes comprising the area of the benefice of Upper Kennet, we received **two representations against the draft Scheme, and two in favour**.

I attach copies of all the correspondence received and a copy of the draft Scheme for your reference.

**Summary of the representations against**

The representations against come from **Graham Kitchen** and **Vicky Evans**, both from the parish of Overton and Fyfield with East Kennett.

Both representors question the rationale and motivation behind the proposals – believing their existing parish to be working well. Mr Kitchen says that, although he has asked many times, he has yet to receive a satisfactory response to what advantages to the benefice being a single PCC would be. Both say that the benefice is geographically divided by the A4 between their parish to the south and the other four parishes to the north and suggest a more suitable proposal would be for those parishes to the north of the A4 to unite and have a benefice of two parishes. They also understand that it is intended that the five existing parishes would have equal representation on the new PCC and think this would be unfair on their parishes which has three churches while the others have only one. They are especially concerned that this would adversely affect St Nicholas Fyfield which is a chapel of ease.
Mr Kitchen stresses that it is easier to engage the local community if they feel connected to their local church, and people prefer knowing that the donations or efforts are focussed in their area rather than the wider benefice. He also queries whether the financial arrangements of a single parish would be simpler and whether finding a treasurer would be easy.

Vicky Evans is concerned about the size of a single PCC and thinks that it will need to have long meetings and that discussion of issues will become watered down as members will be less interested in matters which don’t relate to their own church. She also stresses the importance of volunteer work in the parish and each helping another but says that to include more churches and continue working as they have been would not be possible.

**Summary of the representations in support**

The representations in favour come from Penny Gold (a churchwarden in Winterbourne Monkton with Berwick Bassett) and the Reverend Maria Shepherdson.

Both say that these proposals have arisen from extensive work over a very long period of time and Mrs Shepherdson sets out the details of the process. She lists the advantages of having a single parish as

- A simplified benefice freeing up the rector and lay ministers for more mission ministry and outreach;
- Overcoming the lack of church officers;
- Safeguarding the future of individual churches by allowing those who do not wish to be PCC members to serve on Local Church Councils;
- Making the benefice more attractive to future incumbents.

Penny Gold believes that concerns over finances can be managed by appropriate safeguards, equal representation, restricted funds, and trust between PCC members.

It will be necessary for our Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee to consider this matter and I should be grateful for your comments on the representations in general and on the following, more specific points:

1. **What were the main reasons for the proposals as drafted and what do you consider to be the advantages of having a single parish?**

2. **Was the option, suggested in the representations, to unite four of the five parishes, rather than all of them, considered? If so, what were the reasons for rejecting this?**

3. **Please comment on Mr Kitchen’s view that a single parish could hinder future fund-raising and/or community engagement work and that it will be difficult to recruit a Treasurer and Vicky Evans’ concern that a single PCC will be too large?**

4. **Please confirm that you intend that each current parish would have equal representation on the new PCC and comment on the objectors, concern**
that this would disadvantage the current parish of Overton and Fyfield with East Kennett as that parish has three churches.

5. What will be the status and responsibilities of the Local Church Councils referred to by Mrs. Shepherdson?

6. How do you believe the proposals will impact on the mission of the Church of England in this community?

7. Are there any other factors which the Commissioners should be aware of in their consideration of these representations?

The next meeting of the Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee at which this case could be considered is due to be held on 26th July 2023. If the matter is to be considered at this meeting it would be helpful to receive your response by Friday 23rd June. This is to allow time for this letter and your reply to be sent to the representors, for them to make any further comments and, if necessary, for you to respond.

The Commissioners are required to consider the representations under the quasi-judicial process laid down by the Measure. A legal challenge may arise from the Commissioners’ decision if, among other matters, it is based materially on incorrect information. Of necessity the Commissioners rely on others to provide information to assist their deliberations, and to this end I should be grateful for your help.

The Commissioners will decide on the basis of the written representations whether oral representations will be heard, or the case considered on the papers alone. The decision on whether to hold a hearing is one which will be taken by the Commissioners in the light of the particular circumstances of the case. We will confirm that decision in due course.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Katharine Robinson in the diocesan office.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Crowe
Dear Mr Crowe

Mission & Pastoral Measure 2011
Benefice of Upper Kennet
Proposed Pastoral Scheme

Thank you for your letter dated 5th June regarding the above proposed scheme: the Bishop of Salisbury has asked me to reply on his behalf.

For some years, Bishop’s Staff in the Diocese of Salisbury have encouraged multi-parish rural benefices to consider the most appropriate form of governance for their place and for their anticipated future mission and ministry. This means we have a variegated map with some single parish multi-village benefices and others who retain PCCs in each small community. There are, of course, pros and cons to each approach: some have found this course to be a boon, while others seeking the simplification of one parish have not found that model to be any simpler, with PCC life and politics replicating itself in LCCs but without the corresponding legal authority.

This preamble is important to mention because we have not ‘driven’ the process in Upper Kennet – rather, have supported and advised Rev Shepherdson in her preferred route, reminding her at each stage of these provisions. With that in mind, to your numbered questions:

1. Rev. Shepherdson’s stated reasons are those I consider to be those which commend the scheme – the simplification of governance, the enhancement of local collaboration and the avoidance of duplication in business in small rural communities, some of which are struggling to sustain enough volunteers, officers and PCC members.

2. Yes, extensively in PCC and other meetings over the last six years, and the reasons for rejecting a two parish proposal are the same as those given in the church’s missional objectives for proposing this scheme. All five PCCs have voted to amalgamate, some unanimously. Even Overton and Fifield with East Kennet is overwhelmingly in favour of the one parish proposal. The two objections you have received are the only ones I am aware of locally.

3. I do not foresee local fundraising being impaired by the proposed scheme, as each church may organise a Friends group and its own programme overseen by the LCC. A single PCC would be larger than the present small councils, but not overlarge, I suspect, as none of the electoral rolls is high.

4. The Scheme states that “The Bishop may by Instrument under his hand make provision for ensuring that the congregation of every church or place of worship in the new parish will have its own elected representatives of the laity on the parochial church council of the new parish.” I would expect such provision to be made for equal representation for each of the communities in the benefice, in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. If the Scheme is approved, I will discuss with the incumbent how this might proceed.

5. The “Local Church Councils” referred to by Rev Shepherdson simply reflect their informal operating agreement between the churches. It may in practise be better for them to adopt the more common term “Committee” than the more legal “Council”.

6. I am fairly sanguine about the prospects for mission offered by this scheme. Maria is an able, caring and dynamic incumbent, and we support her pursuit for greater unity in governance, so as to grow the life of each church.

I do trust this assists you in your consideration: please do contact me directly if I can be of further assistance.

With sincere regards,

Rt Revd Dr Andrew Rumsey
Bishop of Ramsbury, Diocese of Salisbury
**PARISH INFORMATION FORM**

It is important that the information provided on this form is accurate as the Church Commissioners may rely on such information in their consideration of representations and their decision could be open to legal challenge if any facts upon which they have relied are found to be incorrect.

Please email the completed form(s) to: pastoral@churchofengland.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BENEFICE</th>
<th>Upper Kennet Churches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge</td>
<td>Rev Maria Shepherdson  22nd June 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patron(s)</td>
<td>Bishop of Salisbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsonage house (address)</td>
<td>The Rectory High Street Avebury SN8 1RF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARISH</td>
<td>Avebury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of parish (adults &amp; children) (Please state how computed)</td>
<td>Census figs 2021 indicate 8.4% average pop increase so approx. 546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches and settings (See Note 1 overleaf)</td>
<td>St James Church parish church. C10, late C12, C13, C14, C15, 1812 and chancel restored 1879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church services and numbers attending (See Note 2 overleaf) (Date built (approx.))</td>
<td>Sundays 2nd Sunday 10am Benefice Eucharist Common Worship 22 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekdays Wednesday 10.30am Celtic Holy Communion (Iona) Prayer G 14 average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional Services ALL Festivals PLUS Benefice All Souls, Maundy Thursday Vigil, Plough Sunday, Summer Songs of Praise, Solstice 3 day event with worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seasonal Fresh expression Summer and Autumn Space to Breathe Meditation @ Rectory Time varies according to season Fortnightly 7 average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BENEFICE WIDE Morning Prayer online 5 days a week Average attendance 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Electoral roll (for the last five years – the most recent first) | 19, 21, 26, 24, 23 |

Staff/lay assistance (e.g. curates, lay readers, NSMs etc.) We have one pool of people for the entire Benefice age and responsibilities in brackets LLM retired with PTO (70’s) No funerals 2 services max a month LPA (82) who is also a church warden/Benefice Treasurer (Taize service only) LPA also LWL(65) One service a month LWL takes occasional services as Chaplin in care home (60) LWL quarterly Chn/Family services (40s) LWL (serving officer-developing slowly not yet taking services) Retired Priest living in benefice PTO 80s – Occasional cover BENEFICE ADMIN support contracted services 12 hours a week

| Church traditions and characteristics of that style of worship | Common Worship, Celtic Communion (Iona) Benefice eucharist LAY intercessors and readers, organist/Visiting Musicians, Celtic Communion – contemplative, short service, Lay readers and Musician. Change |
| Please indicate whether there | YES NO NOT VOTED |

If there is more than one church in the parish please indicate any difference in the church traditions in the individual churches.
is a PCC Resolution under Paragraph 20 of the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (if so, please explain the exact nature of the alternative arrangements made, and the reasons for requesting the same).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parochial church organisations and number of regular attenders</th>
<th>Bellringers - weekly practice – 8 but pool often bigger 4 from village, 3 from next Village others from outside. Craft and Chat Warm Space initiative at Local Café 7-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other parochial and/or community buildings</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other denominations</td>
<td>None – URC Chapel closed 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological make-up of parish (e.g. rural, industrial, residential etc.)</td>
<td>Rural, Village, Farming, World Heritage Site, National Trust Site, Mobile Homes Park, Social housing and expensive owned homes, some second homes and Self Catering Cottages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping and other local facilities (e.g. Post Office, General Store, Doctor, Dentist, Police Station, Pubs, Clubs, other recreational centres)</td>
<td>Community Shop staffed and run by volunteers – peppercorn rent subsidised by the National Trust Part-time Post office subsidised by NT, Pub, Community Café @ the Sports and social Club, A village Social Centre and 3 commercial shops selling gifts to tourists A small private Nursery is located in the former school closed in 2007 – there is no contact with the church -contact not welcomed by the nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus services (please give brief details of any daily bus service around the parish and/or to the nearest town/village centre and their relevance in enabling attendance at church services)</td>
<td>Buses run between Sindon and Devizes roughly hourly, less frequently Sundays – no impact on church attendance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### POPULATION

1. **Is the population increasing or decreasing and, if so, to what extent and over what period?** (In case of doubt about population figures, the local authority may be able to help.)
   - Overall Wiltshire advanced census data for 2021 shows 8.4% increase generally, however in AVEBURY no new developments

2. **How is the population distributed (e.g. in one or more centres, or dispersed over the parish)?**
   - Dispersed with distinct characters
     - Rawlins Park Mobile homes, High street/ green street, Across river to Bray Street and Trusloe, Beckhampton and West Kennet

### PAROCHIAL LIFE ETC.

3. **Approximately how many of those on the church electoral roll live outside the parish?**
   - 6

4. **To what extent does the congregation come from outside the parish?**
   - The congregation come from across the Benefice and Trowbridge, Swindon and Devizes. Festivals attract more locals and our numbers swell.

5. **Does the congregation increase significantly during the holiday season? If so, please give details.**
   - Not significantly – occasionally individuals

6. **Do a significant number of parishioners attend other Anglican churches in the area? If so, give details (e.g. for reasons of convenience or because the same congregation attends different churches in rotation).**
   - Congregation tends to visit other churches in the Benefice on rota but not outside

7. **Has any other denomination a strong following in the parish? If so, please give brief details.**
   - No- although we do have a number of former RC attendees, and occasionally URC attendees at special services and festivals
   - An unusual aspect of Avebury in the high number of people from Pagan or Alternative New Age Faiths living in the village

### CHURCH SCHOOLS

8. **Is there a church school? If so, please state name and type.**
   - NO - school closed in 2007

9. **Approximately how many pupils are there?**

10. **From which area are they drawn?**

11. **Are the school buildings available for parochial purposes? If so, please give details.**

12. **Please also state name and type of other schools in the area.**
   - Kennet Valley C of E Aided Primary and Broad Hinton VC Primary School

### MISCELLANEOUS

13. **What is the parish share, and to what extent does the PCC meet the working expenses of the clergy or lay workers?**
   - Avebury MA02AV 7, 935.45 8, 173.52 238.06 ▲ 3.00% ▲
   - Avebury PCC pays share in full. Clergy: Milage and Telephone expenses only. Avebury has supported other parishes in benefice to meet their share by absorbing Admin costs

14. **Please indicate what, if any, trust funds are available to the parish and for what purposes.**
   - None

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**ARE THERE ANY OTHER FACTUAL POINTS WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE CHURCH COMISIONERS TO UNDERSTAND THE CHARACTER OF THE PARISH BETTER?**

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D3
**PCC Statistics**
Churchwarden and A Deputy Warden are over the age of 80 and increasingly frail, the other Churchwarden is in her 60s a farmers wife and grandmother looking after dependent parents. Of the remainder 3 are aged between 50 and 60 and one is 69.
Younger potential PCC members are not interested in being trustees but would serve on an LCC or committee. This year 3 members of the PCC have died or resigned due to ill health. There are many volunteers who support activities but reluctant to commit to being Trustees.

*Avebury Parish* incorporates the World Heritage Site of Avebury and attracts thousands of visitors a year. These visitors include people who come for spiritual reasons and whose faiths are largely classified as Pagan/New Age, Spiritual not religious. A key aspect of the ministry in Avebury is building bridges between the village, National Trust, Pagan community and Services such as Police and Wilts Council as large seasonal gatherings focus on Avebury and tensions arise. There is also a ministry to the Gypsy Roma and Traveller community and the current incumbent is a Chaplin to both this community and The National Trust. The Rector sits on the Avebury Sacred Stones forum to help keep the peace between village Trust Farmers and Spiritual travellers to festival events. In 2015 the Heroshima Peace flame Trust granted to St James Avebury custodianship of a share of the flame. Visitors travel to see this perpetual flame kept lit now for 7 years and pledge to peace between nations and approx. 65,000 prayers to date have been placed in a prayer tree,

Avebury Church and social centre has been used for many years for Teas for Tourists – every church in the Benefice benefits financially from holding Teas events here and on average this helps each church raise between 1200 and 2000 PER YEAR to assist with share The Church has been a major centre of pilgrimage between 9th and 15th cent. contains significant levels of Pilgrim Graffitti and we are establishing a Pilgrim route with overnight church stays in 2023 linked to the other churches in the Benefice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLEASE: (i) INDICATE THE LEVEL OF SUPPORT, OR OTHERWISE, OF THE PCC FOR THE PROPOSALS/DRAFT SCHEME (OR ORDER); AND/OR (ii) PLEASE SHOW THE VOTING FIGURES (IF A VOTE WAS TAKEN)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>For</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>On the published draft Scheme:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completed by Rev Maria Shepherdson (Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge/etc.) Date June 11th 2023

**Note 1:** Please describe by dedication etc. and state whether the building is a parish church, chapel of ease or other place of worship (eg mission hall etc.)

**Note 2:** Please state (1) the frequency of church services, (2) the time, (3) the type and/or name of the service (eg. Holy Communion, Sung Eucharist, Morning Prayer etc.), (4) the service book used and (5) the average congregation for each service.
## PARISH INFORMATION FORM

It is important that the information provided on this form is accurate as the Church Commissioners may rely on such information in their consideration of representations and their decision could be open to legal challenge if any facts upon which they have relied are found to be incorrect.

Please email the completed form(s) to: pastoral@churchofengland.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BENEFICE</strong></th>
<th>Benefice Upper Kennet Churches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge</strong></td>
<td>Rev Maria Shepherdson  22nd June 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Date of institution/licensing)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patron(s)</strong></td>
<td>Bishop of Salisbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parsonage house</strong></td>
<td>The Rectory High Street Avebury SN8 1RF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(address)</strong></td>
<td>Avebury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARISH</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population of parish</strong></td>
<td>Census 2021 indicate 8.4% average pop increase so approx 690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(adults &amp; children)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Please state how computed)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Churches and sittings</strong></td>
<td>St Peter Ad Vincula Parish Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(See Note 1 overleaf)</strong></td>
<td>Saxon rebuilt 15th cent and again restored Ponting 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date built (approx.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church services and numbers attending</strong></td>
<td>Sundays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(See Note 2 overleaf)</strong></td>
<td>1st Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong></td>
<td>10am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st Sunday</strong></td>
<td>Benefice Sung Eucharist with Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10.00am</strong></td>
<td>Common Worship A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holy Communion</strong></td>
<td>(22 – 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common Worship A</strong></td>
<td>3rd Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(30)</strong></td>
<td>10am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning Prayer (News Seasons ) Service or BCP</strong></td>
<td>Occasional Sung Evensong ( Lay led /Priest )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mattins ( Lay led) with Choir</strong></td>
<td>BENEFICE WIDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(17-20)</strong></td>
<td>Morning Prayer online 5 days a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occasional Sung Evensong ( Lay led /Priest )</strong></td>
<td>Average attendance 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENEFICE WIDE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electoral roll (for the last five years – the most recent first)</strong></td>
<td>51, 47, 43, 44,44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff/lay assistance</strong></td>
<td>We have one pool of people for the entire Benefice age and responsibilities in brackets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(e.g. curates, lay readers, NSMs etc.)</strong></td>
<td>LLM retired with PTO ( 70’s) No funerals 2 services max a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We have one pool of people for the entire Benefice age and responsibilities in brackets</strong></td>
<td>LPA ( 82) who is also a church warden/Benefice Treasurer ( Taize only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL staff/lay assistance</strong></td>
<td>LPA also LWL (65) One service a month,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(e.g. curates, lay readers, NSMs etc.)</strong></td>
<td>LWL takes very occasional services as Chaplin in care home ( 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We have one pool of people for the entire Benefice age and responsibilities in brackets</strong></td>
<td>LWL quarterly Chn/Family services (40s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please indicate whether there is a PCC Resolution under Paragraph 20 of the House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (if so, please explain the exact nature of the alternative arrangements made, and the reasons for requesting the same).</strong></td>
<td>LWL ( serving officer-developing slowly not yet taking services) Retired Priest living in benefice PTO 80s – Occasional communion cover but does not drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
<td>BENEFICE ADMIN support contracted services 12 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOT VOTED</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please indicate whether there is a PCC Resolution under Paragraph 20 of the House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (if so, please explain the exact nature of the alternative arrangements made, and the reasons for requesting the same).</strong></td>
<td>Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church traditions and characteristics of that style of worship</strong></td>
<td>If there is more than one church in the parish please indicate any difference in the church traditions in the individual churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common Worship , Celtic Communion ( Iona)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parochial church organisations and number of regular attenders</strong></td>
<td>Bellringers -weekly practice – 8 but pool often bigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coffee Morning Weekly Village Hall (40+)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other parochial and/or community buildings</strong></td>
<td>Village Hall ( NOT church )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Village Hall ( NOT church )</strong></td>
<td>Please indicate if any building is not primarily for church use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Other denominations** | None
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sociological make-up of parish</strong> (e.g. rural, industrial, residential etc.)</th>
<th>Rural, Village, Farming, Commuters, Expensive housing, One area The Croft, designated social housing. Uffcot Hamlet has farm Tied cottages and 2 Equestrian centres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shopping and other local facilities</strong> (e.g. Post Office, General Store, Doctor, Dentist, Police Station, Pubs, Clubs, other recreational centres)</td>
<td>Post office in village hall one morning a week, No Shops. Village Pub due to close September, Cricket Club and Pitch, Village Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bus services</strong> (please give brief details of any daily bus service around the parish and/or to the nearest town/village centre and their relevance in enabling attendance at church services)</td>
<td>Buses run between Sindon and Devizes roughly hourly, less frequently Sundays – no impact on church attendance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>POPULATION</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Is the population increasing or decreasing and, if so, to what extent and over what period? (In case of doubt about population figures, the local authority may be able to help.)</td>
<td>Overall Wiltshire advanced census data for 2021 shows 8.4% increase generally, no new developments planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 How is the population distributed (e.g. in one or more centres, or dispersed over the parish)?</td>
<td>Distributed – 2 centres and isolated farms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PAROCHIAL LIFE ETC.</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Approximately how many of those on the church electoral roll live outside the parish?</td>
<td>Average 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 To what extent does the congregation come from outside the parish?</td>
<td>The congregation come from across the Benefice and Swindon and Royal Wootton Basset. Festivals attract more locals and our numbers swell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Does the congregation increase significantly during the holiday season? If so, please give details.</td>
<td>No decreases significantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Do a significant number of parishioners attend other Anglican churches in the area? If so, give details (eg for reasons of convenience or because the same congregation attends different churches in rotation).</td>
<td>Same congregation members tend to visit other churches in the Benefice on rota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Has any other denomination a strong following in the parish? If so, please give brief details.</td>
<td>No - we do have a number of former RC attendees, and occasionally URC attendees at special services and festivals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CHURCH SCHOOLS</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Is there a church school? If so, please state name and type.</td>
<td>Broad Hinton VC Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Approximately how many pupils are there?</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 From which area are they drawn?</td>
<td>Broad Hinton and Surrounding villages, some Swindon and Royal Wootton Basset, Broad Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Are the school buildings available for parochial purposes? If so, please give details.</td>
<td>Occasionally – complex to arrange with key holder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Please also state name and type of other schools in the area.</td>
<td>Kennet Valley C of E Aided Primary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MISCELLANEOUS</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 What is the parish share, and to what extent does the PCC meet the working expenses of the clergy or lay workers?</td>
<td>BH PCC pays share in full with one exceptional year of Covid where it managed 85%. Rector expenses Mileage and Telephone only as parishes in the Benefice struggle to meet share in full.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Hinton 18,516.06 19,071.54 555.48 ▲ 3.00% ▲</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Please indicate what, if any, trust funds are available to the parish and for what purposes.</td>
<td>Churches Building Trust raise money for the fabric of the building only and match fund what is raised by the PCC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARE THERE ANY OTHER FACTUAL POINTS WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE CHURCH COMMISSIONERS TO UNDERSTAND THE CHARACTER OF THE PARISH BETTER?

The church is thriving and growing despite the setbacks of Covid which had a high impact on the parish as a whole, and the Current Warden have been key assets in the transformation of a narrow inwardly focussed parish with strong characters not interested in growth. The healing of residual breaches of trust between the village and the church in the 1980s following the appointment of a priest who was a paedophile has been significant and relationships between church and school are excellent and growing in depth. We have new young PCC members and Lay confidence is high. The age profile is changing and we are experimenting with Fresh expressions. One relatively new PCC member and he alone is still rooted in ‘Our Money Our church’. There is a 5 year Local Plan which includes increasing housing provision for locals / social housing.

**Please:** (i) indicate the level of support, or otherwise, of the PCC for the proposals/draft scheme (or order); and/or 
(ii) please show the voting figures (if a vote was taken)

<table>
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<th>Against</th>
<th>Abstentions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the local formal consultations:</td>
<td>Unanimous</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the published draft scheme:</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Completed by Rev Maria Shepherdson (Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge/etc.) Date 11th June 2023

Note 1: Please describe by dedication etc. and state whether the building is a parish church, chapel of ease or other place of worship (eg mission hall etc.)

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<tr>
<td>Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge (Date of institution/licensing)</td>
<td>Rev Maria Shepherdson 22nd June 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patron(s)</td>
<td>Bishop of Salisbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsonage house (address)</td>
<td>The Rectory High Street Avebury SN8 1RF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PARISH              | The Parish of St Michael and all Angels, West Overton, with Christchurch East Kennett, and St Nicholas Fyfield (Chapel of Ease) |

| Population of parish (adults & children) | Census 2021 West Overton 636 East Kennet 70 Fyfield and Lockeridge 190 |

| Churches and sittings (See Note 1 overleaf) | St Michael and all angels 1879 rebuild of a 12th century building with evidence of an earlier church from Saxon times |

- Christchurch East Kennett Rebuilt in 1863, this church dates from the c 11th cent.
- St Nicholas Fyfield Chapel of Ease Anglican parish church, C13, C15 and restored 1849.

| Church services and numbers attending (See Note 2 overleaf) | 2nd Sunday 10am Morning Prayer Common worship Lay Led (20) |

- 4th Sunday 10am Benefice Eucharist Order One Common Prayer (20-25)

- QUARTERLY Songs of Praise and Children and Family Services AFTERNOONS (17-60)

- All Festivals have additional services Christmas (Remembrance Sunday (Lay) easter, Harvest BENEVICE WIDE Morning Prayer online 5 days a week Average attendance 5

| Electoral roll (for the last five years – the most recent first) | 25 (unchanged for 5 years) NR 6 |

| Staff/lay assistance (e.g. curates, lay readers, NSMs etc.) | We have one pool of people for the entire Benefice age and responsibilities in brackets |

- LLM retired with PTO (70’s) No funerals 2 services max a month
- LPA (82) who is also a church warden/Benefice Treasurer (Taize only)
- LPA also LWL (65) One service a month, LWL takes very occasional services as she is a Chaplin in care home (60)
- LWL quarterly Chn/Family services (40s)
- LWL (serving Army officer-developing slowly not yet taking services) Retired Priest living in benefice PTO 80s – Occasional communion cover but does not drive

| BENEFICE ADMIN support contracted services 12 hours a week | |

<p>| BENEFICE ADMIN support contracted services 12 hours a week | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Church traditions and characteristics of that style of worship</th>
<th>Common Worship Order 1 at West Overton, BCP Communion with short sermon at East Kennet and Fyfield, Hymns, Lay Readers and Intercessors, no choir. Taize short meditation service with guitarist and lay led</th>
<th>If there is more than one church in the parish please indicate any difference in the church traditions in the individual churches</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Please indicate whether there is a PCC Resolution under Paragraph 20 of the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (if so, please explain the exact nature of the alternative arrangements made, and the reasons for requesting the same).</td>
<td>Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parochial church organisations and number of regular attenders</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other parochial and/or community buildings</td>
<td>Please indicate if any building is not primarily for church use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other denominations</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological make-up of parish (e.g. rural, industrial, residential etc.)</td>
<td>Rural, Villages, Farming, Small area of Social housing within more expensive owned homes, some second homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Shopping and other local facilities (e.g. Post Office, General Store, Doctor, Dentist, Police Station, Pubs, Clubs, other recreational centres) | Pub in Lockeridge (Fyfield)  
Indian Restaurant newly opened in place of local pub that closed in Covid adjacent West Overton  
Garage on main road on edge of parish sells some foodstuffs and fuel  
Kennet Valley Hall community owned and run | |
| Bus services (please give brief details of any daily bus service around the parish and/or to the nearest town/village centre and their relevance in enabling attendance at church services) | Buses run through West Overton and past Fyfield roughly hourly, less frequently Sundays – no impact on church attendance | |
### POPULATION

1. **Is the population increasing or decreasing and, if so, to what extent and over what period?**
   - In case of doubt about population figures, the local authority may be able to help.
   - Wilts Council indicate 8.4% population rise in Wiltshire – marginal dips in population of the villages

2. **How is the population distributed (e.g. in one or more centres, or dispersed over the parish)?**
   - Dispersed across three villages a mile apart between each Fyfield - divided into lower and upper West Overton - adjacent Lockeridge East Kennet

### PAROCHIAL LIFE ETC.

3. **Approximately how many of those on the church electoral roll live outside the parish?**
   - 6

4. **To what extent does the congregation come from outside the parish?**
   - The congregation come from across the Benefice Festivals attract more locals and our numbers swell. E.g. East Kennet 103 Christmas Day

5. **Does the congregation increase significantly during the holiday season?**
   - If so, please give details.
   - No – decreases in August

6. **Do a significant number of parishioners attend other Anglican churches in the area?**
   - If so, give details (eg for reasons of convenience or because the same congregation attends different churches in rotation).
   - Tend to visit other churches in the Benefice on rota but not outside

7. **Has any other denomination a strong following in the parish?**
   - If so, please give brief details.
   - No - although we do have a number of former Methodist and RC attendees,

### CHURCH SCHOOLS

8. **Is there a church school?**
   - If so, please state name and type.
   - Kennet Valley VA primary School

9. **Approximately how many pupils are there?**
   - 79

10. **From which area are they drawn?**
    - Local villages, Marlborough

11. **Are the school buildings available for parochial purposes?**
    - Yes we use the school for Death café, PCC meetings in winter and occasionally Training e.g. Safeguarding, Icon workshops

12. **Please also state name and type of other schools in the area.**
    - Broad Hinton VC Primary School

### MISCELLANEOUS

13. **What is the parish share, and to what extent does the PCC meet the working expenses of the clergy or lay workers?**
    - Share 2023 Rise indicated in % and amount
    - Overton and Fyfield with East Kennett MA12OV 1.00
    - 44.67 C 20,356.94 20,967.65 610.71 ▲ 3.00%▲
    - Upper Kennet Total Share 63,878.62
    - PCC has not paid the 2020 share but did pay share in full this last year. Rector only claims mileage and telephone. Rectors assimilated costs in Covid to assist parishes meet share. ***Marlborough Anglican Team distributed funds collected as a 1 off to support straggling parishes which helped boost 2021 to 97% This parish remains in dispute with the Diocese over a change in share allocation category.
    - Overton and Fyfield with East Kennett met Share Paid 2018 100%  
      2019 68%  
      2020 79%  
      ***2021 97%  
      2022 100% 2022 Share contributions were late in paid March 2023 to clear balance.

14. **Please indicate what, if any, trust funds are available to the parish and for what purposes.**
    - None
PCC Membership Statistics
4 members under 60, 3 aged 70-75, 3 aged 75 plus, 1 over 80 who holds Churchwarden, Benefice Treasurer and LPA roles. One of the wardens has sold her house and will be stepping down as Warden for West Overton by end of September.

Fyfield St Nicholas is a Chapel of Ease, until recently a member of the PCC no resigned on illhealth who abstained from voting on Unification was a nominal Warden- this was a doubled edged sword as she was so capable that it put others off offering to help. When she stepped away a team came forward to champion their village church- a committee under the guidance of a PCC member who live beside the church has developed and regenerated interest – slowly transmuting into attendance and from which has come a marriage. Members of the committee would be willing to serve on an LCC but not a PCC

East Kennett – BCP services on Sunday is non-negotiable and attracts the same few from the three surrounding villages who also attend Fyfield. A short sermon is preached and appreciated by the majority. One churchwarden, a former Methodist, holds multiple roles a Lay Worship Leader, Benefice Treasurer and works in the Benefice office in a shared space to assist with costs. This can be an issue when it comes to decision making and missional activities and he is an influential and vocal opponent of the Unification. At 82 he is unwell, and is likely to step down.

West Overton is becoming more vibrant and a Bell Ringing Tower is about to be formed. The younger PCC members are hungry for change and the majority of the PCC wish to see an amalgamation including those who are now openly opposed following having contact with Save the Parish movement. The involvement of PCC members who are also school governors is a critical and important missional opportunity, The Benefice Office located in the church opens up possibilities for making the church more accessible and of use to a village where there are no facilities. Population has changed in West Overton over the last 10 years- predominately non-church goers. Main focus of missional activities is through the school. A very successful Quarterly coffee morning is held with a demand for more. A small but vocal group of longer-term affluent residents have been influenced by the Save the Parish movement spearheaded by the views of Deanary Synod Rep – they have not sought information nor have they attended briefings. When Unification was considered 12-14 years ago WOEK and FY Parish was the most strongly in favour- an living example of how well it could work.
The sudden death of the parish treasurer has impacted on morale. A new treasurer has been found. Finances were significantly challenged during Covid- the Rector supported the parishes in paying share by forgoing normal expenses and assimilating additional expenses e.g. live streaming licence etc, encouraging the parish to use the building funds to support share.

---

PLEASE:
(i) INDICATE THE LEVEL OF SUPPORT, OR OTHERWISE, OF THE PCC FOR THE PROPOSALS/DRAFT SCHEME (OR ORDER); AND/OR
(ii) PLEASE SHOW THE VOTING FIGURES (IF A VOTE WAS TAKEN)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>For</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>Abstentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the local formal consultations:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the published draft Scheme:</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completed by Rev Maria Shepherdson (Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge/etc.) Date June 11th 2023

Note 1: Please describe by dedication etc. and state whether the building is a parish church, chapel of ease or other place of worship (e.g. mission hall etc.)

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<td>Winterbourne Bassett</td>
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<tr>
<th>Population of parish (adults &amp; children)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Churches and sittings</td>
<td>Parish Church of St Katherine and St Peter C14, C15 and restored 1857-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(See Note 1 overleaf)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date built (approx.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Church services and numbers attending</td>
<td>1stSunday 10am Lay led Morning Prayer Common Worship (15) 5th Sunday Benefice Eucharist Common worship order 1 traditional language (20-30) All Festivals have additional services Christmas (Remembrance Sunday (Lay) easter, Harvest Afternoon Songs of Praise in Summer Outdoors Pet Service annually BENEFICE WIDE Morning Prayer online 5 days a week Average attendance 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(See Note 2 overleaf)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>1st Sunday 10.00am Holy Communion Common Worship A (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral roll (for the last five years – the most recent first)</td>
<td>34, 34, 40, 44, 44,</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Church traditions and characteristics of that style of worship</td>
<td>Common Worship A Traditional only Morning Prayer Service of the Word using New Patterns for worship Material and occasionally a Celtic Form If there is more than one church in the parish please indicate any difference in the church traditions in the individual churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<th><strong>CHURCH SCHOOLS</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Is there a church school? If so, please state name and type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Approximately how many pupils are there?</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>From which area are they drawn?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Are the school buildings available for parochial purposes? If so, please give details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Please also state name and type of other schools in the area.</td>
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<th><strong>MISCELLANEOUS</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>What is the parish share, and to what extent does the PCC meet the working expenses of the clergy or lay workers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winterbourne Bassett 8,266.10</td>
<td>8,514.08 247.98 ▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00% ▲</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Please indicate what, if any, trust funds are available to the parish and for what purposes.</td>
</tr>
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**ARE THERE ANY OTHER FACTUAL POINTS WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE CHURCH COMMISSIONERS TO UNDERSTAND THE CHARACTER OF THE PARISH BETTER?**
PCC Statistics

Churchwardens One aged 79- stepping down next year. One in late 60s also LPA /LWL
Treasurer is the youngest member in late 50s, 5 members 70 plus, newly appointed member in early 60s.
No secretary currently in post- this has been ongoing for 3 years
The Current Church wardens work closely with the Rector and there is considerable good will towards maintaining the church in the village . However, numbers attending Sunday Services would be less than 10 if we removed attendees form other Benefice Churches on 5th Sunday yet Festivals are very well attended including by those of another faith. Serious consideration is being given to making this church a Festival Church. The Church contains significant levels of Pilgrim Graffiti falling as it does within a Templar Precept and we are establishing a Pilgrim route with overnight church stays in 2023

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PLEASE: (i) INDICATE THE LEVEL OF SUPPORT, OR OTHERWISE, OF THE PCC FOR THE PROPOSALS/DRAFT SCHEME (OR ORDER); AND/OR (ii) PLEASE SHOW THE VOTING FIGURES (IF A VOTE WAS TAKEN)</th>
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<tr>
<td>PARISH</td>
<td>The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene Winterbourne Monkton with St Nicholas Berwick Basset (now maintained by Churches Conservation Trust)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of parish (adults &amp; children) (Please state how computed)</td>
<td>Census 2021 199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches and sittings (See Note 1 overleaf) Date built (approx.)</td>
<td>St Mary Magdalene Winterbourne Monkton Early Saxon rebuilt 12th cent.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Church services and numbers attending (See Note 2 overleaf) Example: 3rd Sunday 10am Benefice Eucharist Common Worship Order 1 22 and 40</td>
<td>Christmas carol service Occasional Communions and Baptisms</td>
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**POPULATION**

1. **Is the population increasing or decreasing and, if so, to what extent and over what period? (In case of doubt about population figures, the local authority may be able to help.)** 1999 Wint Monkton 2021 census but there has been a new development of houses completed since the Census and approx. 15 people live there. Berwick Bassett pop. 49 Wilt Council indicate 8.4% population rise in Wiltshire

2. **How is the population distributed (e.g. in one or more centres, or dispersed over the parish)?** Dispersed across two villages a mile apart

**PAROCHIAL LIFE ETC.**

3. **Approximately how many of those on the church electoral roll live outside the parish?** None

4. **To what extent does the congregation come from outside the parish?** The congregation come from across the Benefice Swindon and Devizes. Festivals attract more locals and our numbers swell.

5. **Does the congregation increase significantly during the holiday season? If so, please give details.** Not significantly – occasionally

6. **Do a significant number of parishioners attend other Anglican churches in the area? If so, give details (eg for reasons of convenience or because the same congregation attends different churches in rotation).** Congregation tends to visit other churches in the Benefice on rota but not outside

7. **Has any other denomination a strong following in the parish? If so, please give brief details.** No - although we do have a number of former Methodist and RC attendees, and occasionally URC attendees at special services and festivals

**CHURCH SCHOOLS**

8. **Is there a church school? If so, please state name and type.** NO - school closed in 2007

9. **Approximately how many pupils are there?**

10. **From which area are they drawn?**

11. **Are the school buildings available for parochial purposes? If so, please give details.**

12. **Please also state name and type of other schools in the area.** Kennet Valley C of E Aided Primary and Broad Hinton VC Primary School

**MISCELLANEOUS**

13. **What is the parish share, and to what extent does the PCC meet the working expenses of the clergy or lay workers?**

   Winterbourne Monkton with Berwick Bassett 6,943.52 7,151.83 208.31 ▲ 3.00% ▲

   PCC pays share in full. Rector expenses for milage and telephone are met but nothing more as the other parishes in the Benefice struggle to meet share in full. PCC has paid more than it needed to cover Benefice Share Costs to enable other parishes to meet Fairer Share returns

14. **Please indicate what, if any, trust funds are available to the parish and for what purposes.** None

**ARE THERE ANY OTHER FACTUAL POINTS WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE CHURCH COMMISSIONERS TO UNDERSTAND THE CHARACTER OF THE PARISH BETTER?**
PCC statistics

The Current Church warden (60s) plays a key significant role in shared ministry with the Rector. She is planning to retire and live elsewhere within 18 months. There is no one on PCC who would take over as Church warden. Our Treasurer is a non-communicant and in very poor health, against the Merger on grounds that the money raised for share is the churches not the diocese and he genuinely does not understand the workings of the Church of England. There is considerable good will towards maintaining the church in the village and a willingness to be part of a non-trustee church committee. There is a small social housing area. Of the other members NONE are under 70. There are few churchgoers living in the village. We have 2 vacancies on PCC.

A new housing development and community hall were completed in the last 18 months and a few new congregation attendees have come to services. All are of retirement age and would be willing to help with an LCC but not PCC.

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Representations against the Draft Scheme

From Graham Kitchen

Dear Sir,
Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011;
Diocese of Salisbury;
Benefice of Upper Kennet

Further to your notification of 13th April 2023, I attach a letter I wrote to Salisbury Diocese on 12th November in which I raised my objections against the proposed unification. In addition to the points made in that letter, I would also like to raise concern at the number of delegates that our existing PCC (West Overton, Fyfield & East Kennett) would be allowed on any new Unified PCC. We have three churches in our PCC (all the other PCC’s only have one church each) but it is my understanding that we might still only get two representatives, which seems a little unbalanced and unfair; but perhaps that is an issue that has to be clarified locally?

With thanks for your consideration,

(Letter of 12th November 2022)

Dear Katherine,

Missions and Pastoral Measure 2021 Benefice of Upper Kennet

Further to your letter outlining the above proposals, may I be allowed to express my personal views.

I stress 'personal views' because I hold various positions within the current Benefice and although I have expressed my opinions at PCC and other meetings, I have always raised objections to the proposed amalgamation into one unified PCC. (I am currently lay chair of the West Overton, Fyfield and East Kennett PCC; treasurer of the Upper Kennet Churches Council; a Lay Pastoral Assistant and one of two Church Wardens at my local church, Christ Church, East Kennett.)

My objections to a unified PCC can be briefly summarised as follows:

1. The current Benefice is geographically separated by the A4; South of the A4 you have the existing unified PCC of West Overton, Fyfield and East Kennett; North of the A4 you have the individual PCC’s of Avebury; Winterbourne Monkton; Winterbourne Bassett and Broad Hinton.

2. I have always maintained that it would make perfect sense if the four individual PCC’s North of the A4 were amalgamated into a unified PCC, and that South of the A4 we remain as we are. Thus, you would end up with a Benefice Of two PCC's which would be perfectly manageable by an incumbent.

3. I have yet to hear from anybody with a satisfactory response to my endless question "what advantages would result from the proposed merger into one PCC" other than that it would be easier to attract a new incumbent if a vacancy occurs (this would still
apply if we had two PCC's as I proposed); that it would be easier to administer with
one overall treasurer (as a retired Chartered Accountant myself, I cannot follow the
logic of this) and that the parishes and villages would work more closely together
following a merger (we don't exactly ignore one another at present and there is a fair
amount of communication and exchanges of ideas etc.)
As regards the WO, FY and EK PCC it would create an additional barrier of
bureaucracy and lessen the workings of our three churches, with no material gain.

4. Rural village churches are supported financially and physically by their immediate
communities who identify with "their" church and will often bend over backwards to
help if there is any likelihood of a church being closed. We see this so often when we
are fund-raising. There is rarely any positive response to the fact that we are all one
family (North and South) and always a preference that any efforts must be for the
local churches rather than the Benefice. This is not intended as a selfish attitude —
it's merely what happens in practice, in spite of the fact that obviously our Rector is
Rector of all our churches.

5. I do have reservations as to whether it will be easy to find a treasurer to handle all the
paperwork and accounting for a new unified PCC, without having to resort to offering
remuneration, which will be another cost for the churches to bear.

6. I am also confused by the way in which Chapels of Ease are considered. They seem to
be demoted in assessing things yet they pay their fairer share, they have services and
also have to fund the cost of maintaining and running their church. Fyfield Church is a
Chapel of Ease — it costs a huge amount to maintain the building and the church is
greatly supported by the village which has recently formed a committee to raise funds
to install an extensive new drainage system (likely to cost around £35,000).

7. Sadly, our PCC treasurer (David Snape) unexpectedly died a few weeks ago but I do
know that his view coincided with mine when we have been discussing unification and
he would certainly have added his name to this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Graham Kitchen

From Vicky Evans

Dear Mr Crowe

For a long time I have been greatly concerned about uniting the Upper Kennet Benefice
into one PCC. Firstly I am not someone who finds it easy to express my views in a clear
and concise way so I apologise if this is a little garbled. I have been to both meetings in
our benefice and listened intently to the working group’s presentation but I’m not
someone who can debate issues easily with those who are clever with words and can
answer questions so eloquently with a strong bias to their way of thinking. It was made
quite clear during the presentations that the Working Party Group have worked
tirelessly to reach their conclusion of one PCC and it was apparent that they were worn
out by the lengthy (years) process in reaching their decision.
For many years I was warden of St Nicholas Fyfield and reluctantly resigned just over a year ago. The issue of the proposed merging of the PCCs had a hand in my decision to step down. Having said that, I am still totally committed to St Nicholas and do everything I can to support the running of the church on a day-to-day and forward planning basis.

One question I have and thus far have been unable to get an answer that satisfies my concerns, is that our current PCC of West Overton, East Kennett and Fyfield works very well, so why the change? The volunteers of our 3 churches work closely together and support each other wherever needed/required but that wouldn’t (couldn’t) be the case with all the other churches. We are volunteers, giving our time willingly, however to involve more churches and try to continue working as we are, simply wouldn’t be possible (if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it). We have operated successfully as one PCC for dozens of years and I simply cannot understand why this has to change. Bigger is not always better.

I appreciate that the incumbent has a large workload with so many churches, however is it legally necessary for that person to attend each and every PCC meeting? I have lived in the benefice for the majority of my life (I am now a pensioner) and the pastoral team is far greater than in the past. In addition to the church office, the Benefice now has a Licensed Lay Minister, two Lay Pastoral Assistants and two Lay Worship Readers to assist the Rector, not forgetting the Church Wardens and many volunteers who remain without title but committed to the church across a broad front.

I fail to understand why Broad Hinton, Winterbourne Bassett, Winterbourne Monkton with Berwick Bassett, and Avebury cannot operate as a separate PCC (all villages located north of the A4). Of course, our Rector currently has numerous meetings to attend with so many PCCs but to reduce five down to two instead of one, would still release a considerable amount of time in her diary. This would still allow the work of the mission and ministry of the church to be more effective particularly on a time basis.

In the Working Group’s presentation, there is a slide which says ... “there will be the same number of elected representatives from each existing parish” – I strongly reject this. Currently West Overton, East Kennet and Fyfield are one parish (situated close to each other at one end of the Benefice, south of the A4) and it would be extremely unfair if the combined 3 churches were represented in the same way as the other churches/parishes.

One PCC will mean an extremely large group of people representing all the churches and as a result the agenda will inevitably be much larger and take far longer. I fear that as time progresses, issues will get watered down particularly as the majority of people will not be so concerned with items that do not relate to their church/parish. In addition, St Nicholas is a Chapel of Ease and one of the smallest churches and I am very concerned that this wonderful building will struggle for equal representation, not helped by being located at the far end of the benefice. On a positive note, St Nicholas has a great team who are working on the restoration project and we have several fund-raising activities in the calendar, as well as being actively supported by the villagers.

Yours sincerely
ANNEX R

Vicky Evans
St Nicholas Church Fyfield

**Representations in favour of the Draft Scheme**

*From Penny Gold*

Dear Mr Crowe,

I wish to add my support to the proposal of uniting the 5 current parishes in the Upper Kennet Benefice into one PCC. I am Church Warden of Winterbourne Monkton with Berwick Bassett and have been part of the Working Group looking at this option for a few years. I believe this proposal will allow a good working base for our small church congregations while retaining the use of our churches. There will be little noticeable change for church congregations. It is hoped that time will be freed up for our Rector from duplication of meetings (x 5) and allow more time for Mission and Ministry to grow followers of Christ and develop Lay Ministry within the area. This in turn may make our churches more attractive to recruiting future incumbents.

I believe that any concerns over finances can be managed through appropriate safeguards, equal representation on the new PCC, restricted funds where necessary and trust in fellow PCC members.

Yours,

Penny Gold

*From the Reverend Maria Shepherdson*

Dear Mr Crowe,

I am writing in SUPPORT of the unification of the 5 Parishes of the Upper Kennet having been appointed here as Priest in Charge, then Rector, in 2011.

**Background information and the journey thus far**

At the time of my appointment the living was suspended as the unification discussions were well under way. I soon discovered that, while two of the parishes were fully in favour, finances and financial arrangements were of significant concern for the other parishes, and two of those parishes were intractable in their views and an impasse had been reached. The then Archdeacon, John Wraw, was explicit in his wishes to see me push through an amalgamation, something I felt was counter-productive and not of God’s will. Therefore, I took another route.

During the first 7 months in post, I conducted a listening exercise. This culminated in a meeting of all PCC members for every parish at which it was agreed we would not force the issue but instead would focus on strengthening relationships, growing congregations that
would work together for the good of all the people in the Benefice and strengthen relationships between treasurers. The Living was reinstated and I became Rector in 2012.

Examples of strengthened unity and signs of working together can be seen in our development of trust around matters relating to finances - while there are still questions, they are from a few individuals who fear change and loss of 'control' of 'their' money

- the development of a Treasurers Group to share information, ideas, manage bulk discounts, and increasingly offer support between parishes by increasing the amount contributed to Benefice And Diocesan Share to help struggling parishes.
- Using Avebury Church to enable all churches to raising vital funds through Teas for Tourists

Missional opportunities have included School Spirituality Days, the development of new ways to disciple children and families, and the development of a range of alternative services such as Space to Breathe and Celtic Communion Evening/ midweek/ outdoors to complimentary the more traditional patterns on Sundays. the ministry team grow from Rector alone to a team of three within a year, and we are now blessed with 6 lay leaders who are welcome and exercise ministry across the whole Benefice. This needs to be strengthened further.

Changes to legislation in respect of management of finances and a prompting in prayer in 2014 led me to a point where I believed God was asking us to look at unification again. One of the deanary benefices, The Whitton Team, undertook the journey with success. A meeting of our Benefice council as held with representatives lay and ordained from the team and we decided to form a Working Group made up for people who had not previously been involved in the deliberations and who represented our age range and profile.

Seeking Unification for the Benefice grew from a number of catalysts– Increasing demands of legislation, greater burden financially and practically on fewer people, difficulty in recruiting to key roles that also carried a trustee role, a national church move towards working together and a general fear that should the current rector move on recruiting clergy in the future and long term would be easier if we were together.

The volunteers that formed the Working Group were those who carried multiple roles in church and community and were by no means all advocates of the Unification at the outset and therefore regarded by congregation members and PCC members as being neutral.

Lizzie Daley - Treasurer Avebury, Co-Chair of Governors at local school, Benefice Safeguarding Officer

Simon Jones- PCC West Overton East Kennet and Fyfield, Co-Chair of Governors at local school, Father of three confirmed teenagers

Robert Fitzpatrick- Church Warden Broad Hinton, Chair of the Broad Hinton Churches Trust

Penny Gold- Churchwarden Winterbourne Monkton with Berrick Bassett, Secretary Denary Synod and Standing Committee Synod
Angharad Hughes – Licensed Lay Worship Leader, Co founder of Little Angels and Movers and Shakers (children and family work) Co-Vice Chair and Chair of C and S committee at Local School, and mother of 2 school aged children

Peter Barry- Church Warden of Winterbourne Basset Church, former Co-Chair of Governors, Clerk to Local Parish Council

Over a 6-year period they undertook the following work and presented their findings for discussion at PCCs at regular intervals - they did their investigations largely without my direct involvement except at key moments of decision making and strategic development of presentations and documents. Thus, we modelled the levels of trust required for effective service within a team.

At every stage of development PCC members had opportunities to ask questions and a compendium of these was kept and answers shared with PCC members etc.

The working Group and Rector has met 14 times in person and on numerous occasions via Zoom meetings during the Pandemic - some of these meetings involved key diocesan stakeholders including the Archdeacon and the Mission and Pastoral Secretary. The PCCs were aware they could ask for the Archdeacon to attend individual meetings, only one PCC asked for this, but due to Covid it became redundant and merely replicated the work done at the Working Group level.

Together they have studied, questioned, experienced and seen first-hand the benefits of uniting parishes, within both Salisbury and Bath and Wells diocese. They consulted with key leaders in lay roles especially Treasurers to learn from them how the PCC, LCCs and Finances work in terms of best practice. We ensured due process was followed at each stage of the consultation and have written records to prove this in the face of some recent challenges during the consultation meetings.

Our Mission and the main thrust of our reasons for the unification are as follows - this was shared widely and consistently over the past few years with PCC members.

- To create a simplified benefice whilst freeing up the rector and lay ministers for more mission, ministry and outreach – where we have trialled working together more creatively faith and outreach to the community have grown and we have worked more effectively together. A united PCC will enable this to happen a greater depth

- To overcome the lack of officers – We are becoming increasingly aware of the need to encourage people who care for and irregularly attend the church to become more committed in the day to day running of the church. The barrier to deeper involvement is the need to be communicants on the PCC and to carry the weight of Trusteeship.

- To safeguard the future of our individual churches and their identities There are a number of local people who would like to offer specific skills for specific purposes who are also willing to undergo safer recruitment but who do NOT want to be trustees on a PCC. Some of these
people are developing their faith and this opportunity to develop LCCs will in itself be a
missional tool for discipleship as is happening elsewhere

- To be attractive to a new incumbent I have been blessed with energy but approach 12 years
here and in late 50s. I am acutely aware that freeing the laity to take greater responsibility
for their churches with oversight from the Priest is crucial in developing future lay leaders. The
OPCCs are aware they there may be a significant gap should I move on which is likely
and there may not be anyone willing to take on 5 PCCs in the future.

- To do all of the above with very little noticeable impact to parishioners
- To encourage lay community members to offer skills and energy without needing to be
trustees who are committed communicants, fostering belonging from which comes belief
- To make the services more attractive to general parishioners

Two members of the working Group were tasked by the Rector with developing a
Operational Guide for LCCs- PCC working, during her extended development leave in 2021. This
document was shared with the Diocesan legal team and Archdeacon and corrections
made as necessary to ensure it complied with the relevant legal regulations. This was
distributed to every PCC member during the final stages of round 1 informal consultation.

The PCCs agreed to proceed from stage 1 informal consultation to Stage 1 of the formal
consultation The PCCs voted by at least a 2/3rds majority and in some parishes unanimously
to move to the last stage and consult widely. During the first stage you received 1 objection.

In proceeding to stage two we

- Advertised the changes in local parish newsletters, via email, public notice boards
  and on Facebook and School websites
- announced the consultations and meetings and proposals online and in person at
  services
- Ensured information notices etc were accessible in all our churches
- Provided two opportunities for public meetings, email and phone support for
  those having questions unable to attend and individual meetings with those needing
  them

We now rest the matter in God’s hands believing we have done our job and the opportunity
is open for the development of something new for God.

I do not want to see decline and realistically it is only by fostering a wider and broader
understanding of what it means to be the body of Christ here in our distinct villages, pulling
together with greater clarity and focus, that the parish churches and the good news will
continue to be at the heart of each village. I cannot see this happening without this next
vital step in uniting a Benefice in this way so it thrives and not merely survives.

Therefore, as it is the will of the majority of all 5 PCCs to work together in unification I fully
endorse the proposal

Rev Maria Shepherdson
Rector

The Rev. Maria Shepherdson
Rector
Upper Kennet Churches
Dear Matthew,
I am writing to let you know that having consulted the Working Group and shared the Bishops letter and Response, and the objections thus far we are fully in favour of pressing on with the case for unification.

We thank the Bishop for his stated assertion that the Diocese has not driven the process, as we have repeatedly told this to the PCCs, Mr Kitchen and others, something that is well documented in PCC minutes.

We are surprised that only two formal objections were received and while some of what has been said is expected, there are some factual inaccuracies and a suggestion we wish to repudiate.

Mr Kitchen holds multiple roles within the life and ministry of the Benefice and has never hidden his views on the Unification.

St Nicholas Fyfield, being a Chapel of Ease, has not had a formal Church Warden, and Ms Evans has always been known as 'warden' as a mark of respect for her stalwart work in championing this church she loves so dearly. Ms Evans states she stepped down from the PCC because of the amalgamation, something none of the PCC or Working Group were aware of as she had been seeking a way of stepping down for many years prior to the discussions around amalgamation. We find her suggestion that the outcome of the Working Groups deliberations and research was predetermined to be a gross misunderstanding of our journey, and repudiate this assertion.

In respect of the numbers of representatives from West Overton East Kennet and Fyfield LCCs on the PCC we are disappointed to read the comments.

The issue was discussed extensively at PCC meetings, within the Working Group and at the public meetings and in individual discussions with Ms Evans and Mr Kitchen.

It is envisaged that the parish as a whole would have between 4 and 6 PCC members, who must fulfil all the criteria laid down legally for membership of the PCC. This was clearly communicated. Indeed, Ms Evans discussed who might be representatives for Fyfield with me directly, as we have so few communicants who have the capacity to be active on a PCC. We also discussed the oversight of the parish as a whole by churchwardens/PCC members and the legal responsibility held by the PCC for St Nicholas currently.

We look forward to hearing from the commissioners in due course,

Many Thanks

Maria

The Rev. Maria Shepherdson
Rector
Upper Kennet Churches