

**House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests  
St Barnabas & St Paul with St Thomas the Martyr, Oxford**

**Report by the Independent Reviewer**

**Introduction**

1. On 19 January 2023 I received correspondence from Mr Richard Doney, a former PCC and Deanery Synod member, expressing concern about the operation of the House of Bishops' Declaration in respect of the Parish of St Barnabas & St Paul with St Thomas the Martyr, Oxford. The letter is appended as Appendix 1.
2. Alongside the letter, Mr Doney provided the following documents, which are attached in Appendices 2-7:
  - Unity & Flourishing: This document, which was prepared for the appointment of an incumbent for the parish in 2018, sets out the bespoke arrangements in place for episcopal oversight which were agreed following a PCC motion passed during the vacancy as part of the vacancy process.
  - Electronic letter to the wider parish sent following the PCC meeting in November 2022 at which the discernment process was agreed. The letter highlights the changes in circumstances following the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's resignation and the possibility of a female self-supporting curate (SSC), serving title jointly with St Barnabas and St Mary Magdalen.
  - Church door notice 1: Dated 21 December 2022 comprises a preamble setting out the consequences of the proposal to rescind the arrangements described in Unity & Flourishing, the text of the proposed motion to be considered by the PCC after the consultation period, the changed circumstances which triggered the review of the previous resolution and arrangements proposed for those who, in conscience, were unable to receive the ministry of women priests.
  - Church door notice 2: Dated 11 January 2023 and setting out the resolution due to be voted on at the meeting on 23 January 2023
  - E-News 7 January 2023 advertising the congregational meeting which formed part of the consultation and discernment process.
  - Email chain 6/7 January 2023: Sent to the PCC Secretary requesting information about the consultation and discernment process in relation to the ministry of female priests and bishops in the parish.
3. Information supplied by the Bishop of Oxford is attached as Appendix 8.

4. In his letter, Mr Doney outlines his concerns and the background. He also states, clearly, that he is not seeking to reverse or invalidate the decision of the PCC. He centres his concerns on the actions of the Bishop of Oxford and those acting on his behalf in a context where a parish has in place a resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration, thus contravening Paragraph 23 of the Declaration:

*Anyone involved in making appointments to ordained parochial roles, whether of incumbents, priests in charge or assistant curates, or in exercising the power conferred by Canon C 8.2(a) to allow occasional ministry in a parish, should do everything possible to achieve an outcome that does not conflict with the nature of the conviction on this issue underlying the PCC's resolution. Where a clerk in holy orders is the registered patron of a benefice in right of his or her office, he or she should not limit his or her selection of candidates to those of a particular sex except in circumstances where a parish has passed a resolution.<sup>1</sup>*

5. Mr Doney specifically states that, at the open meeting on 12 January, the offer of the SSC was explained by the incumbent who reported that the Archdeacon had suggested it might, therefore, 'be time for the parish to have 'the conversation' about the resolution'<sup>2</sup> and states that he 'does not see how this can be in accordance with Paragraph 23 of the Declaration'.

### **Application of the Regulations**

6. It is the clear intention of the Regulations that a matter relating to a particular parish would normally be raised through the grievance process under Regulation 8 of the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests Regulations (the Regulations). However, Mr Doney explained that the PCC was expected to revoke the resolutions it had passed previously, and that the PCC would not pass a grievance resolution under Regulation 8, and he requested that his concern be considered under Regulation 27.
7. As indicated in the guidance notes issued in December 2015, the Independent Reviewer has discretion whether to conduct an inquiry into a concern or not, and how any such inquiry is undertaken. Therefore, my first consideration was whether it was appropriate for the matters raised in his letter to be considered as a concern under Regulation 27.
8. Having reflected on the letter from Mr Doney and on the experience of my predecessors, I concluded that, whilst the circumstances of this case might be limited, I should undertake further work. I made this decision in order to reflect on two factors:

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 23 House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Mr Doney, p3

- Whether it is appropriate to consider the appointment of a female curate, before or after ordination to the priesthood, to a parish which has a resolution and consequent arrangements in place.
  - In 2021 the matter of actual or perceived influence by a diocese on the making of resolutions was raised as part of a matter brought to my predecessor for consideration under Regulation 27. The correspondent was advised that a formal grievance would be considered, if the PCC passed the necessary resolution, but that the matter did not meet the threshold for consideration as a concern. However no grievance was lodged and therefore no recommendations or reflections were publicly shared in relation to the exercising of influence over a parish in relation to the making, or rescinding, of resolutions. As the matter has been raised again albeit in a different context, I believe there is merit in considering it.
9. I therefore wrote to Mr Doney indicating my intention to inquire into his concerns and also wrote to the Bishop of Oxford to ask for information in relation to the proposed placement of the SSC at St Barnabas.

### **Background to the Parish**

10. The parish is in the Diocese of Oxford which operates an area system. The Area Bishop for the Oxford (City) Area in which the parish sits is the Bishop of Oxford.
11. The current parish was formed in 2015 from two previous parishes, St Thomas the Martyr and St Barnabas with St Paul (from here referred to as St Barnabas) which are the grand-daughter and daughter of St Thomas. St Barnabas had passed Resolution B, preserving incumbency to male priests, and St Thomas the Martyr had passed Resolutions A and B under the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993, preserving the exercise of sacramental ministry and incumbency to male priests and had petitioned for Extended Episcopal Oversight under the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993.
12. The document Unity and Flourishing (Appendix 2) describes the PCC for the new parish as *‘working to understand how best to adapt to the Church of England’s new settlement on this matter, as delivered by the General Synod in 2014<sup>3</sup>’*. Unity and Flourishing also describes, in section 2 paragraph d, the broad range of views held by members of the congregation in relation to the ministry of women.
13. In preparation for seeking a new incumbent in 2018 the parish passed the following resolution:

*“To maintain the unity of the parish this PCC requests, on grounds of its several theological convictions, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the*

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<sup>3</sup> From section 2 ‘Who we are’, paragraph c ‘Unity and Flourishing’

*Statement of Need set out below and with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.*"<sup>4</sup>

14. Section 3 of Unity and Flourishing described what the parish needed in light of the resolution as follows:

*We ask the Bishop of Oxford to provide pastoral and sacramental ministry for us, of bishops and priests, which can be received by all members of the parish, and that will thus express and support our needs and identity as described above.*

15. Although requesting arrangements to be made, section 1 c states the commitment of the parish to '*playing a full part in Christ's mission in the Diocese of Oxford, under the Bishop of Oxford, whoever he or she may be, as the Ordinary*'<sup>5</sup>.
16. After the passing of the Resolutions, the Bishop of Oxford made arrangements for the parish which honoured the commitment in paragraph 14 above whilst also providing for priestly ministry to be exercised by men who have been consecrated in the historic male episcopate and episcopal ministry to be exercised by men who have been ordained by bishops who are men standing in the historic male episcopate. Therefore, the parish received the pastoral and sacramental ministry of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet, the Rt Revd Jonathan Goodall, until his resignation from the Church of England in 2021 and the Bishop of Oxford remained the Area Bishop for the parish.
17. In 2022 the parish had a substantial ministry team including a permanent deacon, who is female, two licenced lay ministers, honorary assistant priests and a self-supporting male curate.

### **The concerns**

18. The concerns raised by Mr Doney centre on the juxtaposition of the period of discernment and the offer of the SSC. Specifically, he suggests that the offer of the SSC:
- could be seen to 'set matters of conscience aside to secure an additional pair of hands'
  - put pressure on the PCC to rescind its 2018 resolution and
  - was in contravention of paragraph 23 of the Declaration, quoted above.
19. From the information provided by Mr Doney and that provided by the Bishop of Oxford the timeline was, roughly:

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<sup>4</sup> See 'Unity and Flourishing'

<sup>5</sup> Unity and Flourishing section 1 (d)

3 September 2021: Bishop of Ebbsfleet resigns<sup>6</sup>. From this point St Barnabas ‘flourished’<sup>7</sup> without needing to seek any *alternative* episcopal oversight. That is to say, it did not avail itself of the arrangements for episcopal ministry which had been put in place following the passing of the resolution in 2018.

Summer 2022: Discussions begin with the SSC about her training placement.

October 2022: Title was offered at St Mary Magdalen however, whilst this was an excellent training placement in many respects, it was a city centre placement with limited scope for the experience of occasional offices. Where an area of experience might be lacking in the title post, the usual pattern in the Oxford Archdeaconry is to connect curates with other parishes to give them that missing experience. This led to discussions about an informal arrangement for the SSC to experience school and community ministry with St Barnabas as the appropriate experience was available and the SSC lived in the parish.

26 November 2022: The PCC of St Barnabas met and discussed the possibility of rescinding the resolution set out in Unity and Flourishing following a period of 12 months during which they had not availed themselves of alternative episcopal oversight. It also discussed, according to the electronic letter, the possibility of welcoming the SSC ‘to serve her title in our parish jointly with the Parish of St Mary Magdalen’<sup>8</sup>. The PCC and the parish were advised that the SSC would be ordained priest in 2024 and that this was the prompt for the period of discernment. The email correspondence extract from 5-7 January indicates that this was the first time this had been discussed at a PCC meeting.

21 December 2022: Notice was affixed to the door setting out the consequences of rescinding the resolution, the motion that would be put to the PCC, the changed circumstances which had been outlined in the electronic letter and how the parish proposed to provide ministry to those who could not in conscience receive the ministry of women priests.

11 January 2023: A second notice was affixed to the Church Door giving notice of the PCC meeting on 21 January, setting out the resolution and the summary of circumstances which had led to the period of discernment and proposal to rescind the 2018 resolution. This notice did not set out any provisions for those who could not in conscience receive the ministry of women priests.

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<sup>6</sup> Following changes centrally in the Church of England, the role of Provincial Episcopal Visitor has passed to the Bishop of Oswestry.

<sup>7</sup> The word used in the Electronic Letter introducing the Period of Discernment to the parish.

<sup>8</sup> Electronic letter to the parish

12 January 2023: A congregational meeting was held as part of the discernment process. This was an opportunity for those receiving ministry from St Barnabas or on its electoral roll to express their views and ask questions. The minutes of the meeting would be used at the PCC meeting scheduled for 21 January.

### Reflections from my review

20. From the information presented by Mr Doney and the Bishop of Oxford I offer the following reflections firstly on Mr Doney's specific concerns.
21. First, I will consider his assertion that the act of offering the SSC to the parish was in breach of the arrangements in place and specifically Paragraph 23 of the Declaration:

*Anyone involved in making appointments to ordained parochial roles, whether of incumbents, priests in charge or assistant curates, or in exercising the power conferred by Canon C 8.2(a) to allow occasional ministry in a parish, should do everything possible to achieve an outcome that does not conflict with the nature of the conviction on this issue underlying the PCC's resolution. Where a clerk in holy orders is the registered patron of a benefice in right of his or her office, he or she should not limit his or her selection of candidates to those of a particular sex except in circumstances where a parish has passed a resolution.<sup>9</sup>*

22. Given the evidence that Mr Doney has supplied, the electronic letter and the first of the Church door notices his conclusion that the Bishop acted in contravention of paragraph 23 is understandable.
23. The two parts of paragraph 23 merit separate consideration. The first part is the making of an appointment and the second the exercising of occasional ministry under Canon C 8.2(a).
24. In relation to the matter of 'making an appointment', **I do not believe a formal title post was being offered and therefore in this regard the Bishop of Oxford was not acting in contravention of paragraph 23.** There is a conflict between the electronic letter, the two Church door notices and the letter I received from the Bishop. The letter from the Bishop indicates that the SSC's relationship with St Barnabas was intended to be, and remains, an informal arrangement to address a potential training gap and is not, therefore, an 'appointment'. The electronic letter and the two Church door notices both refer to the SSC serving her title at St Barnabas jointly with St Mary Magdalen which does suggest an appointment. There appears to be some miscommunication in this regard, and **I would recommend that the diocese review its processes**

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<sup>9</sup> Paragraph 23 House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests

**to ensure there is clarity for all parties in relation to informal arrangements.**

25. This brings me to the consideration of the second part of paragraph 23, occasional ministry exercised under Canon C 8.2(a). As the SSC was not being licensed to St Barnabas, any ministry she exercised would have been 'occasional ministry in the parish' under Canon C 8.2(a). How and whether paragraph 23 was properly taken into consideration by the incumbent (who has the power to allow ministry under this Canon) and the Archdeacon who was also involved in the placement of the SSC is unclear. The timeline would suggest that discussions about the exercise of ministry by the SSC began before there is any record of the PCC considering the rescinding of their 2018 resolution. The evidence therefore suggests that those 'involved..... in exercising the power conferred by Canon C 8.2(a)' did **not** 'do everything possible to achieve an outcome that does not conflict with the nature of the conviction on this issue underlying the PCC's resolution' when the initial conversations took place. Assuming the timeline is uncontested, there was, therefore, **a breach of paragraph 23 by the incumbent and the Archdeacon in this regard**, albeit one which was overtaken by the eventual rescinding of the resolution.
26. Mr Doney's second concern was that of influence being exerted on the parish by the diocese. Any conclusions in this regard will be more subjective than those relating to his first concern.
27. Whilst I can appreciate that there are circumstances where the offer of 'an additional pair of hands' might be sufficient to pressure a parish into rescinding resolutions, St Barnabas had an experienced ministry team and I would not expect this pressure on its own, to have been sufficient to pressure the PCC into reconsidering its 2018 resolution.
28. The parish had experienced a year, from the resignation of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet to the discussions regarding the SSC in the early Autumn, during which, according to the electronic letter, it had 'flourished in mission as a parish without needing to seek any *alternative* Episcopal oversight'. This language was also used in the two Church door notices in the sections describing the 'changed circumstances' of the parish. There is no evidence, however, that they were not continuing to operate under the resolution in relation to the exercise of priestly ministry, just that they had not called on alternative episcopal oversight during that period. I would not expect these circumstances, on their own, to trigger a motion to rescind the 2018 resolution.
29. The final factor outlined by the incumbent in the electronic letter was 'the fact that we as a parish officially do not accept the ordination of women as priests bewilders several public figures and parishioners' and he then notes that he 'feels this has become a particular missional barrier for us'.

30. The combination of these three factors might well support the PCC decision to enter the time of discernment with a view to reconsidering the 2018 resolution. The electronic letter and the 12 January meeting suggest that the Incumbent and PCC were genuinely seeking to understand the views of the congregation in preparation for their vote on 21 January.
31. Alongside these two main concerns, Mr Doney points out that the second Church door notice did not include an explicit statement about the proposed provision for those unable in conscience to receive the ministry of women priests or the section on procedure. Nothing in the documentation sent to me suggests that this is a drawing back from the commitments for those who are unable in conscience to receive the ministry of women priests which are set out in the electronic letter and first Church door notice. This second notice was of a different nature as it was, in essence, the procedure described in the first notice and therefore just states what the PCC will be asked to do at its meeting on 21 January.

#### **What could have been done better?**

32. As with most situations, there is learning from the events and process which has been under scrutiny in this case. Some of this is learning for the Diocese and St Barnabas and some might have wider application.
33. While the intentions of the Diocese were positive in relation to the training of the SSC, the timing in relation to the consideration of the resolution in the parish was always likely to generate some concern and, in particular, a perception that the parish was yielding to diocesan pressure in order to increase its staffing.
34. There was miscommunication in relation to the status of the arrangement for the SSC and the reasons for the SSC exercising ministry in St Barnabas. This miscommunication was largely from the incumbent to the parish. While it is impossible to require people to consult over communication, clarity over the legal status of those holding title or other posts in a diocese is important in terms of accountability and management.
35. Mr Doney recounted that, at the 12 January meeting, the incumbent had reported the Archdeacon suggesting the parish 'having the conversation'. Whilst I do not have any written verification of those comments, had they been made they were perhaps unwise especially given that the discernment process had been underway for some weeks and the PCC had already decided to reconsider the resolution.

#### **Wider considerations:**

36. As I indicated, one of the factors which prompted me to consider this concern further was the reference to perceived pressure on a parish in relation to resolutions. As I indicated, my predecessor received correspondence which suggested a parish felt under pressure not to pass a resolution but to make



informal arrangements instead. The correspondent was advised that a formal grievance would be considered, if the PCC passed the necessary resolution, but that the matter did not meet the threshold for consideration as a concern.

37. In this case, the juxtaposition of the suggested placement of the SSC was probably only one of several factors which triggered the discernment process and the rescinding of the resolution. Had this been a parish in serious need of a minister, any appointment process has the potential to be a real or perceived pressure on the parish in potential contravention of paragraph 23.
38. I will be writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury, to draw attention to this, and other matters, which might be the subject of consideration by the Standing Commission on the Declaration.

### **Conclusion**

39. Following my review of the documentation presented, I do not believe that the Bishop of Oxford contravened paragraph 23 of the Declaration as no appointment was made. However, I believe the timeline indicates that insufficient attention was paid to Canon C 8.2(a) when the initial discussions began about the SSC exercising ministry at St Barnabas resulting in a breach of paragraph 23 prior to the rescinding of the 2018 resolution by the PCC in January 2023. Therefore, I recommend that the diocese review its processes in relation to informal arrangements which involve parishes which have passed resolutions to ensure that this is both understood and applied.
40. I thank Mr Doney for his correspondence.

Maggie Swinson

September 2023

Richard Doney

19 January 2023

The Independent Reviewer

c/o Ms Sue Moore via email

*Dear Mrs Swinson*

**Request for the Independent Reviewer to consider a general concern about the operation of the House of Bishops Declaration**

**Paragraph 23 of the Declaration – Diocese of Oxford**

Firstly, congratulations upon your recent appointment as Independent Reviewer. I pray that it will not be too much of a thankless task and please rest assured that you and your work will regularly be in my prayers.

When your appointment was announced, I hoped to myself that you would not have much work to do. I had certainly never envisaged that I would have cause to write to the holder of this office.

However, despite my mental and emotional prevarications as to whether to do so, recent events in the parish of St Barnabas & St Paul with St Thomas the Martyr, Oxford have led me to determine that I must. I am a member of the electoral roll in the parish and had been a member of the PCC for 12 years until I resigned in February, 2022. At the point of resignation, I had served as Deanery Synod representative for ten years and as a member of the Deanery Standing Committee for eight. I had latterly served as Deanery Secretary and I had also previously been a member of the Diocesan Synod for a triennium.

This is a parish that unanimously passed a resolution under the House of Bishops declaration in March 2018 and reaffirmed it in vacancy. The text of that motion as well as the PCC's Statement of Need and the diocese of Oxford's response to it are helpfully set out in a document entitled 'Unity and Flourishing' which I attach as **Appendix 1**. At its meeting on 26 November 2022, the PCC resolved to reconsider the resolution, a decision communicated to the wider parish in an electronic letter dated 1 December 2022 (**Appendix 2**). This was followed by a notice being affixed to the church door (copy at **Appendix 3**) and a subsequent notice which is substantially the same as that in appendix 3 whilst removing the sections on 'caring for those who cannot in conscience receive the ministry of women priests' and on 'procedure' (copy at **Appendix 4**). There was also an open meeting of 12 January 2023 which, according to the letter of 1 December, was one at which "members of the PCC will happily answer questions from regular members of the congregation or from the parish" and which, according to the section of the subscription-only e-news bulletin sent on 7 January 2023 was "for members of the Electoral Roll and those who regularly receive pastoral and sacramental ministry here" (**Appendix 5**). The parish/congregational consultation closes shortly, and the PCC is to consider rescinding the resolution at its meeting on Saturday 21 January 2023.

I should first state what this letter is not. In writing to you, I am very much not seeking to influence, reverse or invalidate the decision that the PCC are to come to at their meeting on 21 January. From discussions at the recent open meeting with members of the PCC, it seems inevitable that the resolution is to be rescinded, as, of course, is the PCC's right. This will be a painful decision for me and my family but that is neither here nor there for these purposes. Indeed, my complaint is not against the PCC nor any officers of the parish but rather against the Bishop of Oxford and those acting on his behalf.

As I note above, at the time of writing this letter, this is a parish which has in place a resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration owing to some members of the church community holding theological convictions which are often described as being of a 'traditional Catholic' nature. I would draw your particular attention to the Bishop of Oxford's words on page two of Appendix 1:

*I accept the PCC's request as set out in the resolution and the two documents "Unity and Flourishing" and "The detail of our request..."*

*The PCC is clear that the ministry of priests in the parish should continue to be men who have been ordained by a bishop who is a man and who has been consecrated in the historic male episcopate.*

In the 21 December door notice (Appendix 3), the Vicar and PCC Secretary state:

*"...the parish has been invited to welcome a self-supporting curate (who happens to be a woman) to serve her title in our parish jointly with the Parish of St Mary Magdalen from July 2023. If the PCC voted in favour of the motion, she would...be ordained priest in 2024."*

The 1 December letter (Appendix 2) says:

*The PCC also [at its meeting on Saturday 26 November 2022] discussed the possibility of welcoming a self-supporting curate (who happens to be a woman) to serve her title in our parish jointly with the Parish of St Mary Magdalen from July 2023. If accepted, she would join the ministry team as a deacon, and be ordained priest in 2024. This possibility has prompted us to enter this period of discernment now.*

Email correspondence between another parishioner and the PCC Secretary (**Appendix 6<sup>1</sup>**) demonstrates that the meeting of the 26 November 2022 is the only PCC meeting at which the proposal has been discussed.

Taken together, the above clearly and explicitly demonstrates that the diocese of Oxford has offered a female curate (intending to proceed to ordination to the priesthood) to a single parish benefice which, at the relevant time, has in place a resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration that priestly sacramental ministry in the parish be reserved to male priests. The offer of a female curate to a parish which has passed a resolution for reasons of traditional Catholic theological conviction, other than as a permanent deacon, is clearly contrary to the PCC's request to the Bishop of Oxford, a request explicitly accepted by him.

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<sup>1</sup> This parishioner has consented to the content of this exchange being forwarded to you, but not his identity, and has redacted their name and email address. They have also redacted all other contact details. They had not removed the name of the incumbent whose name is, of course, a matter of public record but had redacted the name and email address of the PCC Secretary.

Paragraph 23 of the Declaration states:

*Anyone involved in making appointments to ordained parochial roles, whether of incumbents, priests in charge or assistant curates, or in exercising the power conferred by Canon C 8.2(a) to allow occasional ministry in a parish, should do everything possible to achieve an outcome that does not conflict with the nature of the conviction on this issue underlying the PCC's resolution.*

At the open meeting on 12 January, the Incumbent relayed that the offer of a curate had come to him from the Archdeacon. The proposed curate (who is to be non-stipendiary) happens to be resident in our parish and, apparently, the diocese felt it would be awkward for her not to be able to minister in the parish. The Archdeacon therefore suggested that it might be time for the parish to have 'the conversation' about the resolution.

I do not see how the actions taken on behalf of the Bishop of Oxford (by the Archdeacon and others) can possibly be in accordance with Paragraph 23 of the Declaration.

An offer by the Bishop/diocese of ministerial resource to a parish if - and only if - it rescinds a resolution made for reasons of theological conviction seems, to my mind, deeply inappropriate. It could be seen to put pressure on parishes to set matters of conviction and conscience aside to secure an additional pair of hands. That, in this instance, it has been done so openly and brazenly may have cause to undermine trust and confidence in the operation of the Declaration and mutual flourishing more widely, which I believe gives me cause to ask you to consider investigating and reporting on it.

To repeat in conclusion: I do not seek to overturn or change the course the PCC appears likely to embark on at its meeting on 21 January, 2023. If the resolution is rescinded, I certainly do not wish that anything be done to jeopardise the offer of a curacy to the ordinand in question (whose identity I do not know); that would be grossly unfair on her. However, if you agree with me that the actions of the diocese of Oxford are not in accordance with the Declaration, I would warmly welcome seeing you issue guidance to dioceses as to what is and is not appropriate engagements with parishes with a resolution under the Declaration in place.

I am at your disposal if you require any further information from me to take this forward..

Yours sincerely

*Richard Doney*

## APPENDIX 2

### THE PARISH OF ST BARNABAS AND ST PAUL, WITH ST THOMAS THE MARTYR

#### “Unity and Flourishing”

*A Motion and Statement of Need for the parish concerning the pastoral and sacramental ministry of priests and bishops.*

##### The Motion

*“To maintain the unity of the parish this PCC requests, on grounds of its several theological convictions, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the Statement of Need set out below and with the House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.”*

##### Our Statement of Need about the pastoral and sacramental ministry of priests and bishops.

###### **1. Our aspiration:**

- a) We desire sacramental unity in our common life and recognize this to be a central Gospel precept, in accordance with Christ’s prayer to the Father before his Passion: *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. St John 17: 20-23*
- b) We desire to live and flourish as a parish, set within the wider life and structures of the Church of England, in accordance with the Five Guiding Principles set out in the House of Bishops’ Declaration.
- c) We are committed to playing a full part in Christ’s mission in the Diocese of Oxford, under the Bishop of Oxford, whoever he or she may be, as the Ordinary.
- d) We wish to maintain our present fellowship and spirit of common endeavour for the building up of the Body of Christ in the parish and also to contribute to the diversity and inclusiveness of the wider Diocese and the Church of England.
- e) We recognize that our parish, with its distinctive history and traditions, set in amongst the Universities, Theological Colleges and City of Oxford, is uniquely positioned and called upon to play its part, in the wider Church, in building up a spirit of mutual flourishing of which we can all justly be proud.

###### **2. Who we are:**

- a) Our overriding wish as a parish is to flourish and maintain unity whilst allowing differing theological views to be held with integrity. We live with and cherish a *status quo* in which we strive to achieve this. This *status quo* covers many aspects of the life of discipleship and it is one in which the pastoral and sacramental ministry in the parish has been offered by priests and bishops whose ministry can be received by all members of the parish. The parish rejoices in the preaching, teaching and serving ministry of both women and men.
- b) Historically Resolutions A, B and C were in place at St Thomas and Resolution B at St Barnabas. These Resolutions ceded with the formation of the new parish in 2015; since then the PCC has been working

to understand how best to adapt to the Church of England’s new settlement on this matter, as delivered by the General Synod in 2014.

- c) We are not a ‘party’ parish, strongly pushing one particular view or position of conscience in this matter because we recognize that this would cause offence to others who are our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are not a parish in which any one can say; “My party has triumphed”. Rather we are a parish in which all strive to live together in bonds of love, mutual understanding and respect.
- d) Our congregation includes amongst its number:
  - i. Those who hold the conviction that the Incarnation is about all humanity, and therefore the ordination of women to the priesthood and consecration to the episcopate fulfills and completes these ministries.
  - ii. Those who believe the calling of the twelve apostles, who were alone with Jesus at the Institution of the Eucharist, is integral to the Church’s tradition of reserving priestly and episcopal ministry to men alone; since the time of the apostles the Church has retained this pattern, as established by our Lord.
  - iii. Those who consider that a change to the nature of the threefold ministry to admit women as priests and bishops could be received but only if this was with the authority of the whole Church, both East and West.
  - iv. Those who are reluctant to take any steps to formalize the *status quo* for fear of this being seen by others as a narrowing or restricting of our life together.
  - v. Those who regard the custom of reserving priestly and episcopal ministry to men alone as too early and too holy a tradition to be changed now.
  - vi. Those for whom this is not a matter of great moment, and whose paramount concern is the unity of the parish.
- e) Within this diverse spectrum of convictions, in order to promote unity and flourishing, it is necessary for all to be able to receive the same sacraments in the same parish church.

###### **3. Our need:**

We ask the Bishop of Oxford to provide pastoral and sacramental ministry for us, of bishops and priests, which can be received by all members of the parish, and that will thus express and support our needs and identity as described above.

###### **4. Conclusion:**

We hope and pray that we will be allowed to proceed together and flourish as a **parish** – the etymology of the word **parish**, is the New Testament Greek *παροικία* (*paroikia*), meaning ‘a sojourning in a foreign land’. In this our exile we are bound to uphold one another: acknowledging our fallen nature, the most important thing we do together is to ask God’s mercy and, kneeling upon our knees, receive our *viaticum*, our heavenly food for the journey. We need to continue to do this together as a congregation, ‘and with joy we’ll persevere.’

## FROM THE BISHOP OF OXFORD



The Parish of St Barnabas and St Paul with St Thomas the Martyr serves two key areas of the city of Oxford: the distinctive and vibrant residential area of Jericho and the former St Thomas' parish which is one of the key gateways to the city. There will be very significant redevelopment in both of these communities in the next decade.

The next parish priest needs to give the highest priority to engagement with the parish and local community, including St. Barnabas' School and to ensure that the Church plays its part in the key developments which will shape these communities for the next generation. The priest will need the right gifts and skills for this community engagement as well as the liturgical, pastoral and teaching gifts to grow and nurture the existing congregations and encourage the planting of new communities particularly in St. Thomas' Church.

The parish has been well served by its previous priest and as the statement of needs demonstrates, the congregation set a very high priority on unity in mission. I have set out below the key paragraphs of my response to the passing of the resolution in relation to the House of Bishops Declaration concerning the pastoral and sacramental ministry of priests and bishops.

The Diocese of Oxford is currently also developing fresh vision around the theme of becoming a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world: more contemplative, more compassionate and more courageous. Within the Oxford area we are pioneering in the next year new patterns of accompanying enquirers and new believers to baptism and confirmation. A commitment to this renewal of catechesis in this parish and more broadly will be essential alongside a concern to reach out to the whole community in love and service.

### **The provision of episcopal and priestly ministry**

I accept the PCC's request as set out in the resolution and the two documents "Unity and Flourishing" and "The detail of our request..."

The PCC is clear that the ministry of priests in the parish should continue to be men who have been ordained by a bishop who is a man and who has been consecrated in the historic male episcopate.

The PCC is further clear that the episcopal ministry is provided by bishops who are men and who have been consecrated by bishops who are men, standing in the historic male episcopate.

The PCC's request is that the Bishop of Oxford works with the Bishop of Ebbsfleet and agree together how best to collaborate in providing for the sacramental and pastoral ministry of the parish and to build up its unity and mission. In order to fulfil the PCC's request, I will remain the Area Bishop for the Parish. The

Bishop of Ebbsfleet and I have agreed to collaborate in a sustained manner in the provision of episcopal ministry as need requires in Bishop's Jonathan's role as an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Oxford. The Wardens (in the vacancy), and the incumbent should feel free to continue to invite the Bishop of Ebbsfleet to conduct confirmations or other services. They and other licensed clergy should feel free to seek his pastoral advice from time to time as an expression of this sustained and ongoing relationship and in the spirit of this collaboration.

+ **Stephen Oxford**

## THE OXFORD DEANERY

The geographical and sociological area covered by the Oxford Deanery is very diverse, covering the central commercial and retail areas of the city, the world-class University of Oxford, the highly populated suburban areas and the smaller and larger village communities outside Oxford's ring road. There are areas of considerable affluence and poverty, including a homeless community that lives on the streets and in the hostels of the city centre.

The Oxford Deanery is part of the Oxford Archdeaconry and the wider Oxford Diocese, under the Episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Oxford. The Cathedral of the Oxford Diocese is also in the Oxford Deanery. The deanery meets regularly for Chapter and Synod meetings, at which speakers are invited to talk on a range of issues that are of shared concerns to the parishes.

Some of the key features of the Oxford Deanery are as follows:

- We have good links with our neighbouring Cowley Deanery which covers the southern and eastern half of the city.
- There is a full spectrum of churchmanships reflected in the parishes: Traditional Anglo-Catholic, liberal Catholic, central, Charismatic and conservative Evangelical and also shades of different practice expressed in the same benefice/parish.
- Some of the largest congregations of the Oxford Diocese are found in our Deanery. These tend to be (although are not exclusively) eclectic congregations with large groups of people coming into the parish to worship.
- Parishes/benefices outside the city centre have a church attendance made up of people who are much more likely to live within the parish boundaries, and who are therefore more likely to be involved in the life of their local communities.
- More ordination candidates are produced in a year from our many thriving churches in the deanery than some small dioceses.

We hope that the new incumbent will play a full and active part in the life of the Deanery, along with other clergy staff and lay members at St Barnabas with St Thomas. You will be most welcome!

Warmly in Christ

**Will Donaldson (Revd) Area Dean, Oxford**

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN PRIESTS IN OUR PARISH: A PERIOD OF DISCERNMENT**

The PCC of St Barnabas, St Paul & St Thomas the Martyr Oxford has decided to enter a period of prayerful discernment regarding the ministry of women priests in our parish. This is part of a review of the current arrangements (which have been in place for four years in our parish), in accordance with the *House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests*.

At a meeting of the PCC on Saturday 26 November 2022, the PCC discussed the possibility of rescinding the current resolution and statement of need<sup>i</sup>, which has allowed us to seek oversight from a Provincial Episcopal Visitor (thus far this has been The Bishop of Ebbsfleet, but from now on will be The Bishop of Oswestry, - based in Lichfield Diocese - due to changes made at national level by the Archbishop of Canterbury). During the past year, and since the resignation of Bishop Jonathan Goodall to become a Roman Catholic priest, we have flourished in mission as a parish without needing to seek any *alternative* Episcopal oversight and have maintained a good working relationship with the Bishop of Oxford as our Ordinary and Area Bishop.

The PCC also discussed the possibility of welcoming a self-supporting curate (who happens to be a woman) to serve her title in our parish jointly with the Parish of St Mary Magdalen from July 2023. If accepted, she would join the ministry team as a deacon, and be ordained priest in 2024. This possibility has prompted us to enter this period of discernment now.

#### **Envisioning the next stage on a journey in faith and love**

There are many and varied theological and biblical arguments regarding the ordination of women, and the parish has had a thorough discussion of these previously. Each voice in the debate has very valid and thought-through opinions. The fact that we as a parish officially do not accept the ordination of women as priests bewilders several public figures and

parishioners. I feel this has become a particular missional barrier for us. If we are to survive and flourish as a Church in the years ahead, we need to find ways of engaging with an increasingly irreligious society, whilst accepting that we cannot always agree, either with each other or with the culture in which the Church finds itself. Moreover, and crucially, in entering this period of discernment, we are not assenting to cultural pressure, but rather seeking to advance the kingdom by drawing on the very best spiritual and theological talent that the Church of England is currently offering to us.

And so, with this in mind, I propose that we review our current arrangements. In making the decision, it is important to remember that the parish is not in a vacancy and is not at present looking for a new incumbent (Vicar). In any future incumbent vacancy, the PCC will, as a matter of legal requirement, need to review this matter as part of the appointment process.

If, after this period of consultation, the PCC were to rescind the current arrangements, I would put the following procedures in place to ensure as wide a variety of parishioners and newcomers could continue to flourish as followers of Christ in our Church:

1. We would ensure that on every Sunday and major Festival, at least one of the Masses in the parish is celebrated by a man who has been ordained by a male bishop.
2. We would ensure that those who are unable in conscience to receive the ministry of a priest who is a woman are able to call upon a male priest for any of the relevant Sacraments (for example Confession, or Anointing).
3. We would ensure that we detail who is celebrating each Mass, so that we are as transparent as possible with all.



## Process of consultation

The PCC is very aware of the variety of theological views and sensitivities on this matter in the congregation, in the wider parish and the community. In seeking to discern the way forward, we wish to hear from anyone on the Electoral Roll for whom St Barnabas Jericho is their primary place of worship, and who receives our pastoral and sacramental ministry on a regular basis. We wish to hear from people of all theological points of view.

We are happy to receive written communication, by way of letter addressed to the Vicar, at [REDACTED], or by email to the Honorary Secretary, [REDACTED] before **14 January 2023**. The process of discernment can also involve members of the congregation talking to any PCC member at a mutually convenient time.

We will also hold an open meeting at St Barnabas Church at **6.30pm on Thursday 12 January 2023** at which members of the PCC will happily answer questions from regular members of the congregation or from the parish.

The process of discernment will conclude on **21 January 2023**.

PCC members are listed in a footnote below.<sup>ii</sup>

*“Discernment ... involves hard work. According to the Bible, we do not find set before us, pre-packaged, the life we are to live.”*

(Pope Francis, Catechesis on Discernment during General Audience, 31 August 2022)

*Fr Christopher Woods, Vicar, November 2022*

*Footnotes overleaf...*

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<sup>i</sup> The current arrangements are set out in a document entitled 'Unity and Flourishing' which can be viewed here:  
<https://stbarnabasjericho.squarespace.com/s/unityandflourishing>

Under the current arrangements, the parish cannot accept the sacramental or pastoral ministry of a priest or bishop who is a woman.

<sup>ii</sup> PCC members are listed as follows:



**THE PARISH OF ST BARNABAS AND ST PAUL, WITH ST THOMAS THE MARTYR,  
OXFORD**

**Preamble**

A Motion rescinding the arrangements made for the parish concerning the pastoral and sacramental ministry of priests and bishops, thereby

- terminating the agreement under which the Bishop of Oxford collaborated with the Provincial Episcopal Visitor (then the Bishop of Ebbsfleet) in providing for the sacramental and pastoral ministry of the parish
- placing the parish under the sole episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Oxford, whoever he or she may be,
- and accepting the pastoral and sacramental ministry of women priests in our parish.

**The Motion**

Taking account of the changed circumstances as set out below, this PCC proposes that the motion adopted by the PCC in vacancy in 2018 requesting that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the Statement of Need (as published in the Parish Profile) and in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests be rescinded.

**The changed circumstances**

Bishop Jonathan Goodall, who as Bishop of Ebbsfleet acted as our Provincial Episcopal Visitor and lived in Reading, resigned last year to become a Roman Catholic priest. Since then we have flourished in mission as a parish without needing to seek any alternative Episcopal oversight and have maintained a good working relationship with the Bishop of Oxford as our Ordinary and Area Bishop. The new Bishop of Ebbsfleet will provide oversight to Conservative Evangelical Parishes; Catholic parishes that cannot accept oversight from the Diocesan Bishop and/or accept the ordination of women as priests and bishops will be overseen by the newly-created See of Oswestry. It is hard to see how we could have a sustained and collaborative relationship with a bishop who will function in the Diocese of Lichfield.

In addition, the parish has been invited to welcome a self-supporting curate (who happens to be a woman) to serve her title in our parish jointly with the Parish of St Mary Magdalen from July 2023. If the PCC voted in favour of the motion, she would join the ministry team as a deacon, and be ordained priest in 2024.

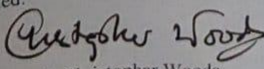
**Caring for those who cannot in conscience receive the ministry of women priests**

1. on every Sunday and major Festival, at least one of the Masses in the parish is celebrated by a man.
2. a male priest is always available for the relevant Sacraments (e.g. Confession or Anointing)
3. we announce who is celebrating each Mass, so that we are as transparent as possible with all

**Procedure**

At its meeting of 26 November the PCC decided to enter upon a period of prayerful discernment and consultation with the congregation. The PCC will vote on the motion at its next meeting, on 21 January 2023 at 11 a.m. in St Barnabas.

signed:

  
The Rev'd Christopher Woods  
Vicar

dated: 21 December 2022

Hon. Secretary

The Parish of St Barnabas and St Paul with St Thomas the Martyr  
Parochial Church Council

The PCC will meet on Saturday 21 January 2023 at 11 a.m. in St Barnabas' Church to vote on the following motion:

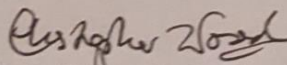
*Taking account of the changed circumstances as set out below, this PCC proposes that the motion adopted by the PCC in vacancy in 2018 requesting that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the Statement of Need (as published in the Parish Profile) and in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests be rescinded.*


**The changed circumstances**

Bishop Jonathan Goodall, who as Bishop of Ebbsfleet acted as our Provincial Episcopal Visitor and lived in Reading, resigned last year to become a Roman Catholic priest. Since then we have flourished in mission as a parish without needing to seek any alternative Episcopal oversight and have maintained a good working relationship with the Bishop of Oxford as our Ordinary and Area Bishop. The new Bishop of Ebbsfleet will provide oversight to Conservative Evangelical Parishes; Catholic parishes that cannot accept oversight from the Diocesan Bishop and/or accept the ordination of women as priests and bishops will be overseen by the newly-created See of Oswestry. It is hard to see how we could have a sustained and collaborative relationship with a bishop who will function in the Diocese of Lichfield.

In addition, the parish has been invited to welcome a self-supporting curate (who happens to be a woman) to serve her title in our parish jointly with the Parish of St Mary Magdalen from July 2023. If the PCC voted in favour of the motion, she would join the ministry team as a deacon, and be ordained priest in 2024.

signed:

  
The Rev'd Christopher Woods  
Vicar

  
Hon. Secretary

dated: 11.1.23





## E-news for Epiphany





St Barnabas Jericho  
Timely words | Encouragement | Compassion  
[www.sbarnabas.org.uk](http://www.sbarnabas.org.uk)

## The Feast of the Epiphany

8am: Low Mass  
10.30am: High Mass  
*with Blessing of Chalk for Home Blessings*  
6.30pm: Evening Prayer

Sunday 8 January 2023



# EPIPHANY

### Services for the Octave of The Epiphany

#### **Tomorrow, Sunday 8 January, the Solemnity of the Epiphany**

8.00am: Low Mass *Celebrant: The Vicar*

10.30am: High Mass with blessing of chalk for home blessings  
*Celebrant and Preacher: The Vicar*

6.30pm: Evening Prayer

**Monday 9 January, *The Baptism of the Lord***

9.00am: Morning Prayer

**Tuesday 10 January *William Laud, Bishop***

9.30am: Low Mass

**Wednesday 11 January, *Feria***

12.30pm: Low Mass (*at St Thomas the Martyr*)

**Thursday 12 January, *Feria***

5.30pm: Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit

**Friday 13 January, *Hilary of Poitiers, Bishop***

12.30pm: Low Mass (*at St Thomas the Martyr*)

**Saturday 14 January**

5.00pm: Vigil Mass (*at St Thomas the Martyr*)

**Sunday 15 January 2023, *The Second Sunday of Epiphany***

8.00am: Low Mass *Celebrant: Fr Matthew Salisbury*

10.30am: High Mass *Celebrant: The Vicar; Preacher: Jenny Pittaway, LLM*

6.30pm: Evening Prayer

**Volunteer Magi needed!**

At our High Mass for Epiphany tomorrow, we are looking for three young people who would like to act as Magi and to present the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh at the crib at the end of the Mass. Regal costumes will be available if your child fancies wearing one!

**For our prayers this week*****The sick***

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### *The Faithful departed*

[REDACTED]

### *Anniversaries of death*

[REDACTED]

## CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**Thursday 12 January at 6.30pm in St Barnabas Church**

As part of the discernment process regarding the ministry of women priests and bishops in our parish, we are holding a meeting for members of the Electoral Roll and those who regularly receive pastoral and sacramental ministry here. **The purpose of the meeting** is as follows:

- To allow anyone who prefers to talk, rather than to write, to express their opinion on whether or not the parish should rescind the current arrangements and proceed to accepting the ministry of women priests and bishops.
- To provide the opportunity for parishioners to ask questions of clarification of members of the PCC.

**The procedure of the meeting:** There will be a Mass, as usual at 5.30pm, after which tea and coffee will be available for people who arrive in advance of the meeting. The meeting will be relatively informal, but will be minuted, with names not included (unless individuals wish for their names to be specifically

mentioned in the minutes). The minutes of the meeting will remain confidential to the PCC, and will be used, alongside all the written submissions, to inform its decision at its next meeting on 21 January.

Not all members of the PCC are able attend the meeting, but all are invited and some have indicated their intention to attend.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ORIGINAL LETTER](#)

The deadline for written submissions to the Honorary Secretary of the PCC has been extended to **Monday 16 January 2023**.

The official text of the Motion has now been posted on the doors of both churches for a 4 week period, as is legally required.

The next **Church cleaning day** is on Friday 13 January at 9.30am. All welcome to come and lend a hand. Coffee and cake provided!



Our Saturday Vigil Mass resumes again after the Christmas break on Saturday 14 January at 5.00pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. It lasts for 30 minutes and is in the beautifully tranquil environment of a candlelit 12th century St Thomas Church.



## SITUATION VACANT

### Church Fabric Officer

██████████ has acted as PCC Fabric officer with great skill for several years but now wishes to stand back.

We would like to find someone to replace her who:

- \*Is organized.
- \*Would enjoy being involved in the care of our beautiful Churches.
- \*Is skilled at negotiating with a range of tradespeople.
- \*Can follow-through on tasks to their completion.
- \*Has an attention to detail.

This is a voluntary role, but very rewarding. Full handover and some training will be provided. Support will be given. Interested? Please speak to the Vicar in the first instance. Thank you!

## Community Information





If you would like to volunteer, please email the Vicar for the rota:

[vicar@sbarnabas.org.uk](mailto:vicar@sbarnabas.org.uk)



### **JERICHO BOOKS & TEA TOWELS NOW FOR SALE IN CHURCH!**

Together with the Jericho Mug, these are the ideal Christmas presents!

We now have a small supply of books which you can purchase from St Barnabas at **£20** each. Please contact the Vicar.

We also have a small number of tea towels priced at **£5.00** each to purchase in Church. More will be available soon.



St Barnabas Jericho  
Cardigan Street  
Oxford, England  
United Kingdom

[Unsubscribe](#)



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**S Barnabas - PCC Minutes**

3 messages

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[REDACTED] 5 January 2023 at 12:52

To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: Revd Christopher Woods [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

I hope that all is well with you. I'm just beginning to consider my response to the ongoing consultation and discernment on the ministry of female priests and bishops in the Parish.

To assist in that please could you provide me with copies of the approved minutes of any PCC meeting in the last 12 months that has considered any of the following (in accordance with Church Representation Rule M28(6))?

- 1) The Ministry of female priests and deacons in the Parish generally.
- 2) Consideration regarding the rescinding or alteration of the resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration on the ministry of Bishops and Priests.
- 3) The invitation for the parish to receive a Curate in Summer 2023.

Whilst I'm aware that the PCC's draft minutes from its most recent meeting are likely yet to be approved, I would also be grateful for sight of a draft minute or precis of the PCC's discussions on the above topics.

Many thanks indeed in advance for your assistance.

Best wishes

[REDACTED] (ER Member)

---

[REDACTED] 6 January 2023 at 19:43

Cc: Christopher Woods [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Happy New Year.

The only PCC meeting in the last twelve months at which we considered the matters to which you refer (and in accordance with Church Representation Rule M2896)) was our most recent one of 26 November. But given that minutes of PCC meetings are confidential until approved by the PCC and signed by the Chair I do not think it would be proper for me to show you a draft.

I am sorry about this, but I consulted Fr Christopher, and he agreed with me.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

---

[REDACTED] 7 January 2023 at 14:21

Cc: Christopher Woods [REDACTED]

Many thanks indeed, [REDACTED] for getting back to me on the point. I entirely understand the reasoning on the minutes of the 26 November and it is helpful to understand that this meeting was the first at which these proposals have been considered by the PCC.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

Maggie Swinson by email:  
[REDACTED]

15 May 2023

Dear Maggie

Thank you for your enquiry of 3<sup>rd</sup> April in respect of St. Barnabas, Oxford. I'm sorry for the delay in responding. I've consulted with the Revd. [REDACTED] who is Associate Archdeacon in Oxford and also Vicar of St Mary Magdalene.

The ordinand in question is [REDACTED] who was in need of an SSM title post in central Oxford and who lives in Jericho, in St. Barnabas parish. A number of options were explored over the summer of 2022. The outcome of these conversations were that a title was offered at St. Mary Magdalene parish in early October.

St. Mary Magdalene is a city centre parish and cannot offer very much experience in occasional offices but otherwise is a superb training parish. [REDACTED] normal pattern has been to connect the curates with other parishes to gain this experience. There were conversations in the autumn about [REDACTED] potentially exercising a ministry in school and community in partnership with St. Barnabas but this would have been (and remains) an informal arrangement.

St. Barnabas were at the time actively considering a change to their relationship for episcopal oversight (which in any case have been bespoke). This change was under discussion at the time and clearly any ministry that [REDACTED] was to exercise as a priest in St. Barnabas would be contingent on the relevant formal PCC process.

Clearly that was many months into the future in December 2022. I should add that St. Barnabas already benefits from the ministry of a female deacon: the Revd. [REDACTED].

I gather that the particular query you received arose from a paragraph in the preparatory paper prepared by the incumbent which did slightly overstate the proposed arrangement as a joint title. The document was very clear however that any such arrangement was conditional on the PCC voting in favour of the motion.

As you know the PCC did approve the motion through a proper process in January.

Please do be in contact if further information is required

With kind regards

