

Church Commissioners

Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee

Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011

**Benefices of Basingstoke; and Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown,
St Gabriel**

(Diocese of Winchester)

Note by Rex Andrew

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 11 December 2024 (*Paper MPCP(24)38*), the Mission, Pastoral & Church Property Committee (MPCPC) considered the draft Pastoral Scheme providing for:

- (i) terminating the team ministry established for the area of the benefice of Basingstoke;
- (ii) the union of the benefice of Basingstoke and the benefice of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel and their constituent parishes, for the appointment of the Reverend John Hudson as the first incumbent of the new benefice and for his parsonage house to be that of the benefice of Basingstoke, for the transfer of the parsonage house of the benefice of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel to the Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance (“the WDF”) for diocesan purposes and for the future patronage arrangements for the new benefice; and
- (iii) for the number of churchwardens to the new parish to be limited to two (the default position would otherwise require ten given that there is a parish church and four parish centres of worship within the area of the proposed parish).

2. The Committee will recall that the draft Scheme attracted **three representations against and 20 in favour**. Those opposed to it were concerned that two churchwardens for the proposed parish was not adequate, and that the views and needs of the Popley St Gabriel’s congregation could be sidelined, with the proposals being driven by the Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) church plant at Basingstoke.

3. The Committee discussed the draft scheme, but its main concern about the proposals was how the governance structures would work in the new benefice and parish, and the balance between informal and formal governance arrangements, including the number of churchwardens.

4. Whilst the Committee appreciated that informal arrangements were proposed, for example with the lay and ordained leads and a group looking after the services, it thought it would be important for the church community at Popley to have stronger formal governance arrangements to ensure their voices could be heard and influence decision making for the new benefice. As it stood, there can be no guarantee that members of the

congregation from Popley would have continued representation either on the new PCC, or as churchwardens.

5. Therefore, the Committee concluded that it would support the parts of the scheme which related to terminating the existing team ministry and the union of benefices and parishes, but did not support the clause which restricted the number of churchwardens to two.

6. Under clause 10(3) of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 the Commissioners were able to propose an amendment to a scheme. They were required to consult with the relevant bishop and the bishop was required to consult the DMPC in turn. The Committee agreed it was not appropriate for the Commissioners to propose a specific number of churchwardens, so suggested the scheme be amended by deleting clause 3(2). This would mean the scheme defaults to the requirement for ten churchwardens. The Commissioners did note the concern about being able to recruit churchwardens, but on balance agreed it was important to make sure the governance arrangements in the new benefice were sufficiently robust.

5. The Committee Secretary's letter to the Bishop of Winchester and the WDF's response are attached (**Annex A**), with the map (**Annex B**) and Committee paper from December (**Annex C**).

The response from the Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance (WDBF)

6. The WDBF says that of the three options the Commissioners had suggested, namely:

- (i) Agree the amendment; or
- (ii) Refuse the amendment; or
- (iii) Refuse the amendment and propose an alternative

the Bishop is minded to go with option (ii) of **refusing the amendment**, which it says has the support of both parishes. It also cites a recent precedent in the Pastrow benefice in the same diocese which limits the number of churchwardens to two (from what would otherwise be the default requirement of 14, given that the area of the new Pastrow parish has seven parish churches within it).

7. The main argument for limiting the number of churchwardens focussed on the following issues:

- (i) **Sustainability**: the parishes agree that two church wardens is sufficient for long term sustainability, in concert with the other administrative and governance arrangements put in place.
- (ii) **Support from parishes**: both the PCCs of Basingstoke and Popley support limiting the number of churchwardens to two.
- (iii) **Improved governance**: the diocese argues that simplifying the governance structures and reducing the number of churchwardens allows a better use of limited resources and provides a more effective support structure for the incumbent and leaders.

- (iv) **Effective decision making:** a smaller number of churchwardens allows for more effective conversation and decision-making, particularly in relation to managing complex and sensitive issues, like HR and safeguarding, where regular contact is needed and knowledge of the church administration is crucial.
- (v) **Trust and accountability:** a smaller group of churchwardens can build higher levels of trust, accountability, which is essential for supporting the incumbent and other leaders in managing their responsibilities.
- (vi) **Precedent:** the document cites the Pastrow scheme as a precedent, where the number of churchwardens was limited to two in a similar union of parishes, and the diocesan response implies this arrangement is working well.

8. **The issues for the Committee are:**

- Does the Committee have enough information to make a decision?
- Given there is explicit support from Popley PCC for the new arrangements is the Committee content to allow the scheme to proceed as originally drafted?
- Are the diocesan proposals likely to further the mission of the Church and make better provision for the cure of souls?

For decision

The Committee is asked to decide if it approves the draft Scheme (as originally worded) to proceed notwithstanding the representations made against it.

Rex Andrew

Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ

23 April 2025



The Rt Revd the Bishop of Winchester

Wendy Matthews
*Pastoral and Closed Churches
Secretary*

By email only

Our ref: NB41/14/RA

18 December 2024

Dear Bishop Philip

**Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011
Benefices of Basingstoke; and Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel
Proposed Pastoral Scheme**

I am writing to formally advise you of the outcome of the Church Commissioners' consideration of the draft Pastoral Scheme providing for:

- terminating the team ministry established for the area of the benefice of Basingstoke; and
- the union of the benefice of Basingstoke and the benefice of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel and their constituent parishes, for the appointment of the Reverend John Hudson as the first incumbent of the new benefice and for his parsonage house to be that of the benefice of Basingstoke, for the transfer of the parsonage house of the benefice of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel to the Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance for diocesan purposes and for the future patronage arrangements for the new benefice. It also provided for the number of churchwardens to the new parish to be limited to two (the default position would otherwise require ten given that there would be a parish church and four parish centres of worship within the area of the proposed parish, each requiring two churchwardens).

The Commissioners carefully considered the case, and the detailed points raised in the representations. Their main concern about the proposals was how the governance structures would work in the new benefice and parish, and the balance between informal and formal governance arrangements, including the number of churchwardens. Whilst the Committee appreciated that informal arrangements were proposed, for example with the lay and ordained leads and a group looking after the services, they thought it would be important for the church community at Popley to have stronger formal governance arrangements to ensure their voices could be heard and influence decision making for the

new benefice. As it stands there can be no guarantee that members of the congregation from Popley would have continued representation either on the new PCC, or as churchwardens. Whereas there could be other arrangements which would ensure that members from Popley and the other congregations would always have a voice in the parish.

As part of their deliberations the Commissioners are also required to consider the needs, traditions and characteristics of the parishes. They noted that there was no intention to alter the current designations of the four parish centres of worship, which was important, as that would ensure the Popley community retained a sense of identity.

Therefore, the Commissioners concluded that they would support the parts of the scheme which related to terminating the existing team ministry and the union of benefices and parishes, but they did not support the clause which restricted the number of churchwardens to two. Under clause 10(3) of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 the Commissioners are able to propose an amendment to a scheme. They are required to consult with the relevant bishop and the bishop will need to consult the DMPC in turn. The Committee agreed it was not appropriate for them to propose a specific number of churchwardens, so they suggest the scheme is amended by deleting clause 3(2). This would mean the scheme defaults to the requirement for ten churchwardens. The Commissioners did note the concern about being able to recruit churchwardens, but on balance agreed it was important to make sure the governance arrangements in the new benefice were sufficiently robust.

In terms of a response to that proposed amendment, you have the following options:

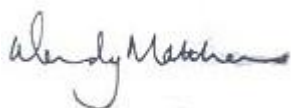
- **Agree the amendment** in which case the scheme would go ahead and be made in the usual way without referral back to the MPCPC (but first having to go through the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council requirements). There would then be scope for you to agree a scheme under the Church Representation Rules for representation of the laity from each congregation if you wished. Alternatively, you could opt for a further amending pastoral scheme, which would allow you to change the churchwardens provision after further local consultation;
- **Refuse the amendment** proposed and explain the reasons for that decision to the Committee. They would consider the response in February and either approve or refuse the whole scheme;
- **Refuse this amendment and propose an alternative.** In that case the MPCPC would be asked to consider the alternative at its meeting in February and would approve or refuse the amended version.

A revised version of the scheme which reflects the Commissioners' amendment is attached. The next meetings of the Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee at which this matter could be further considered are due to be held on 27 February and 19 March 2025. If the matter is to be considered at the meeting on 27 February, **we will need to receive your response by 10 February 2025.**

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Ven Richard Brand and Jayne Tarry for their information, and we look forward to receiving your response.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Wendy Matthews".

Wendy Matthews

Further Supplementary Response Proposed Union of Basingstoke and Popley

March 2025

To: Wendy Matthews

Thank you for your letter of 18 December in which you detailed the response of The Church Commissioners to the draft scheme providing for:

The termination of the team ministry established for the area of the benefice of Basingstoke; and the union of the benefice of Basingstoke and the benefice of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel and their constituent parishes, for the appointment of the Reverend John Hudson as the first incumbent of the new benefice and for his parsonage house to be that of the benefice of Basingstoke, for the transfer of the parsonage house of the benefice of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel to the Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance for diocesan purposes and for the future patronage arrangements for the new benefice. It also provided for the number of churchwardens to the new parish to be limited to two (the default position would otherwise require ten given that there would be a parish church and four parish centres of worship within the area of the proposed parish, each requiring two churchwardens).

We are grateful for The Commissioners' support of the termination of the existing team ministry and the union of benefices and parishes.

We are saddened that The Commissioners felt they could not support the clause which restricted the number of churchwardens to two. We have gone back to both parishes and you will see from the attachments that the PCC of Basingstoke and their Incumbent strongly support having only two churchwardens; the PCC of Popley and its current churchwardens also support this proposal. Both parishes and their governing bodies are requesting the Commissioners support their proposal.

The PCC of Basingstoke parish has taken some time to reflect on your response and their full reply is attached. In summary, they urge The Commissioners to reconsider their judgement, in particular in light of:

- The reduction in churchwardens is key to achieving the sustainability of the parish for this and future generations.
- It also, when coupled with work already completed, provides improved governance, allocation of resources and support for all congregations.
- Simplification of governance structures of the four existing districts has been one of the drivers of growth in ministry at all of the churches.
- Simplification of governance structures and a reduction in the number of churchwardens are both an aid to sustainability and key to covering the key roles such as finance and safeguarding in a sizable church of more than 500 people.

- This coming together of the districts has been cemented with the congregations through targeted and consistent communication and a new combined identity of Basingstoke Church.
- This has allowed for the delivery of a varied offering of services and events to cater for the whole parish by working together at key moments of the year.
- In 2023 more than 2500 people attended church at Christmas and in 2024 more than 1500 at Easter, which is a result of the joint working and clear communications.
- Such a large number of churchwardens – the size of some PCCs – does not allow for effective conversation or decision making. It also doesn't allow for an agile and effective Standing Committee.
- Experience shows that dealing with complex and sensitive issues is not possible with six wardens, let alone ten.
- One of the roles of the churchwarden is to provide support and advice to the Rector in leading the church, for this to be effective there has to be a high level of trust, accountability and confidentiality which is something you *can* build in a group of three people, but are unlikely to achieve as those numbers increase to eleven.

Popley PCC have confirmed that they fully understand the proposal to reduce the number of wardens to two, and give it their full support:

- Restricting the number of churchwardens to two would lead to a simplified and lighter PCC and governance structure which is the best way forward.
- Congregation pastors will act as the main link between the leadership of the unified church of the new single parish, and the individual worshipping communities of each church site.
- Looking forward to joining with Basingstoke Church to become the new Basingstoke parish, and to the joint future as a modern, forward-thinking church.
- Seeking governance of the new parish to be as simplified and robust as possible, and having two churchwardens for the parish is the best way to achieve this.

We would, therefore, strongly urge the Commissioners to support the proposal of the new proposed parish of Basingstoke (including Popley) having two churchwardens on the grounds that:

1. Both Basingstoke and Popley PCCs are supportive of the reduction in number of churchwardens to two.
2. The scheme continues to have the full support of the Bishop of Winchester.
3. We would also like to draw your attention to the Pastrow scheme which was made 2023. This saw the union of eight parishes: Charlton with Foxcotte, Facombe, Hatherden with Tangle, Hurstbourne Tarrant, Penton Mewsey, Smannell with Enham Alamein, Vernham Dean and Linkenholt and Weyhill to become a single parish. The number of parish churches was established at seven; and three chapels of ease were created. At the same time, the number of wardens for the parish was limited to *two*. We believe this establishes a precedent.

To confirm, we wish to reject the amendment proposed by The Commissioners re the number of churchwardens, and seek your approval of the whole scheme, including the reduction in number of churchwardens to two as supported by both parishes concerned, the Bishop, and the precedent.

Response from Basingstoke PCC

Executive Summary

We believe that the reduction in churchwardens from a potential of 10 to 2, as proposed in the scheme, is key to achieving the sustainability of the parish here in Basingstoke for this and future generations. It also, when coupled with work we have already completed here, provides improved governance, allocation of resources and support for all congregations.

Background

In early 2022 we set out to build a centralised leadership for our whole parish in order to build more sustainable and effective governance; make better use of our resources; increase efficiency; allow for growth and to create better equality between the four churches which had, in recent years, although one parish, been operating largely independently.

At the time St Michael's and to a lesser extent All Saints were financially sustainable, but Christ the King was facing challenges with basic maintenance and St Peter's was only open once per month and was unable to support regular ministry from the church.

Each church was overseen by a DCC and, until 2017, had a Team Vicar for each, then from 2017-22 St Peter's and Christ the King had shared one Team Vicar. The diocese has been, and still is, unable to provide dedicated clergy for each church, the DCCs had struggled to fill many of their vacancies, and the church warden vacancies had been hard to fill with at least one vacant.

The work so far

The Parish has disbanded the DCCs centralising the governance of the church and the operation of its finances. It has brought the clergy into centralised leadership and ministry roles focused on the thriving of the whole parish. This happened in Autumn 2022 and has been one of the changes which has driven growth in ministry at all four of the churches.

The centralisation of the finances has allowed for a more strategic distribution of the parish funds. As an example, Christ The King, which had formerly had very little money, received a £50,000 cash injection to modernise part of the building. This is just one example of the focus the combined leadership has on the thriving of all its churches.

The four churches now also share a staff team in a central office serving all four churches. The efficiencies in this are both an aid to sustainability and key to covering the key roles such as finance and safeguarding in a sizable church of more than 500 people.

Other key roles that had been held by the churchwardens and DCCs have now been centralised too, such as building maintenance which is held by a number of PCC worship groups and by a paid facilities manager.

Alongside all of this structural and governance change, the working together has been cemented with the congregation through targeted and consistent communication and a new combined identity of Basingstoke Church. This has allowed us to deliver a varied offering of services and events to cater for the parish by working together at key moments of the year. We saw in 2023 more than 2500 people at Christmas and in 2024 more than 1500 at Easter, which is a result of the working together and clear communications.

The Churchwarden issue

Vacant roles

We currently have 8 churchwarden roles with two of those in vacancy. Despite being a church of 500 people we have been unable to fill the final two, which is one of the issues with the current and proposed plan to have such a large number of churchwardens.

Effective communication

The Rector is leading a staff team, a large church and a team of clergy and most of the Churchwardens have full-time jobs. With this being the case, it has very rarely been possible to have regular meetings with all of the churchwardens, which is something which is essential to the communication and mutual support for a properly functioning churchwarden role.

Even when everyone does get together you have a committee potentially of 14 people - the size of many PCCs - which doesn't make for effective conversation or decision making. It also doesn't allow us to have an agile and effective Standing Committee, as calling that is as hard as calling a PCC meeting.

Difficult issues

In a busy parish with an employed staff team we find ourselves facing some challenging issues around things like HR or safeguarding. These are issues that need significant input, as with a recent HR issue, that cannot be dealt with at committee level, and require some regular and in depth conversations with a high level of knowledge of the running of the church. Our recent experience showed that dealing with complex sensitive issues is just not possible with six wardens, let alone 10.

One of the roles of the churchwarden is to provide support and advice to the Rector in leading the church, for this to be effective there has to be a high level of trust, accountability and confidentiality which is something you can build in a group of 3

people, but has thus-far shown not to be practicable between a group of 7, and most certainly wouldn't in a group of 11.

Representation

The varied styles of worship that exist within each of our buildings mean that while a churchwarden may 'represent' a building, they don't represent all of our congregations as they only really attend one service. The idea that the churchwardens are there to represent each 'church' doesn't represent the reality of what is going on on the ground.

We have set up very effective steering groups, service pastors, pastoral leadership teams and other such groups to allow for communication, feedback and true representation of each congregation to the PCC and the Rector. This has been very successful and removes the need for each churchwarden to know all the people and everything that is going on.

The last piece of the puzzle

All of the work we have done has been to support effective and sustainable governance while also creating structures for quality feedback, communication and representation.

The only thing left that doesn't align with the work done across the parish is the Churchwarden role, and the legal position of being a Team Ministry. We are not currently operating as a Team Ministry, but the Churchwarden roles remain.

We would like to ask the Church Commissioners to support us in our work to continue to build a thriving, growing and sustainable parish for the future by passing the scheme to reduce the number of Churchwardens in the Basingstoke Parish.

We hope that you can see from what we have done so far that as a PCC we are committed to all of the four churches, and that commitment would extend to the reunited parish with St Gabriel's.

Outcomes

We believe the result of the change would see improved oversight, improved support for the clergy, more effective governance, the ability to fill all of the roles and the continuation of a sustainable model for the future of this parish.

Revd John Hudson and Basingstoke PCC
March 2024

Jayne Tarry

From: Kelvin Lewington [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 February 2025 13:08
To: Richard Brand
Cc: Jayne Tarry; John Hudson; Stephen Leach
Subject: Supporting statement from Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown St Gabriel.

Hi,

Please find below supporting statements from the PCC and ChurchWardens of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown St Gabriel.

Supporting statement from the churchwardens of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown St Gabriel.

In addition to the comments in the statement from the PCC of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown St Gabriel, Marion Davies and Kelvin Lewington as ChurchWardens of St Gabriel's would like to take this opportunity to confirm that we also fully support the proposal by Rev John Hudson to restrict the number of Church Wardens of the new enlarged single parish of Basingstoke to two.

We have had several meetings with Rev John Hudson during this process where he has outlined his proposal to make the governance of the new parish as simplified and robust as possible, and we agree that his plans to have two churchwardens is the best way to achieve this.

Kind Regards.

Marion Davies and Kelvin Lewington

Churchwardens for St Gabriel's Church Popley

Supporting statement from the PCC of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown St Gabriel.

After careful consideration and discussion we have concluded that we fully support the proposal by Rev John Hudson to restrict the number of churchwardens of the proposed enlarged single Basingstoke parish to two.

It has been our understanding since we first started talks with Basingstoke Church regarding the pastoral reorganisation scheme to become one parish, that John Hudson has always believed that restricting the number of churchwardens to two would lead to a simplified and lighter PCC and governance structure which we agree is the best way forward.

We are reassured that the congregation pastors will be able to act as the main link between the leadership of the unified church of the new single parish, and the individual worshipping communities of each church site.

We are very much looking forward to joining with Basingstoke Church to become the new Basingstoke parish, and to our future as part of a modern, forward-thinking church.

Kind regards



Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011

Benefice of:

Pastrow

in the diocese of Winchester

Wendy Matthews
Head of Mission, Pastoral and Church Property
Church Commissioners
Church House
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3AZ

PASTORAL SCHEME

This Scheme is made by the Church Commissioners this 10th day of May 2023 in pursuance of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, the Right Reverend Deborah, Bishop of Southampton, duly appointed in that behalf pursuant to section 13 of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007, having consented thereto.

Union of parishes

1. The parish of Charlton with Foxcotte, the parish of Facombe, the parish of Hatherden with Tangle, the parish of Hurstbourne Tarrant, the parish Penton Mewsey, the parish of Smannell with Enham Alamein, the parish of Vernham Dean and Linkenholt and the parish of Weyhill, being the eight parishes comprising the area of the benefice of Pastrow, shall be united to create a new parish which shall be named "The Parish of Pastrow".

Churches within the new parish of Pastrow

2. (1) The church of Christ Church, Hatherden, being one of the parish churches of the parish of Hatherden with Tangle, the church of Holy Trinity, being the parish church of the parish of Penton Mewsey, the church of Saint Thomas, Charlton, Andover, being the parish church of the parish of Charlton with Foxcotte, the church of Saint Peter, being the parish church of the parish of the parish of Hurstbourne Tarrant, the church of Saint Mary the Virgin, Vernham Dean, being one of the parish churches of the parish of Vernham Dean and Linkenholt, the church of Saint Michael and All Angels, being the parish church of the parish of Weyhill, and the church of Christ Church, Smannell, being the parish church of the parish of Smannell with Enham Alamein, shall all be parish churches of the new parish of Pastrow.

(2) The church of Saint Barnabas, being the parish church of the parish of Facombe, the church of Saint Peter, Linkenholt, being a parish church of the parish of Vernham Dean and Linkenholt, and the church of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, Tangle, being a parish church of the parish of Hatherden with Tangle, shall, upon the date on which this Scheme comes into operation, cease to be parish churches.

(3) Subject to any provisions of the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 which apply thereto and any directions thereunder, any register books and records of those churches referred in clause 2(2) hereof which remain in parochial custody shall be dealt with as the Bishop shall direct.

Number of churchwardens for the new parish of Pastrow

3. The number of churchwardens to be appointed for the new parish of Pastrow created pursuant to clause 1 hereof shall be two.

Archdeaconry and deanery

4. The new parish shall belong to the archdeaconry of Winchester and the deanery of Andover.

Assistant curates: consequential provision

5. 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 Pastrow.

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 Deborah,

Bishop of Southampton.

) +Debbie
) +Debbie (May 10, 2023 13:39 GMT+1)
)

Executed as a Deed by the Church Commissioners for England

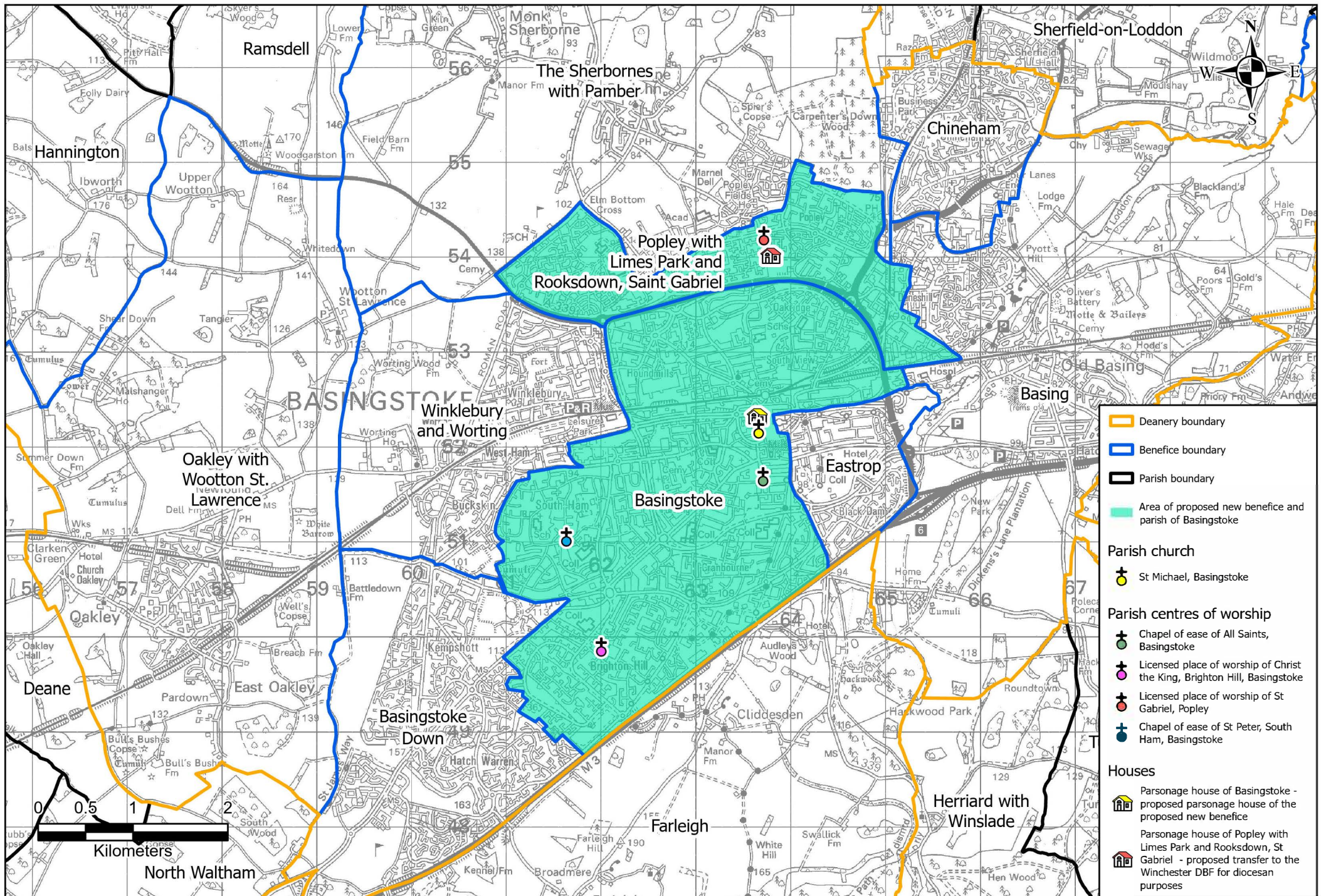
acting by two authorised signatories:

J.M. Tipping
J.M.Tipping (May 10, 2023 14:27 GMT+1)

Signature of Authorised Signatory

Marc

Signature of Authorised Signatory



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Church Commissioners

Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee

Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011

**Benefices of Basingstoke; and Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown,
St Gabriel**

(Diocese of Winchester)

Note by Rex Andrew

Case Summary

<p>The draft Pastoral Scheme provides for:</p> <p>(i) terminating the team ministry established for the area of the benefice of Basingstoke; and</p> <p>(ii) the union of the benefice of Basingstoke and the benefice of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel and their constituent parishes, for the appointment of the Reverend John Hudson as the first incumbent of the new benefice and for his parsonage house to be that of the benefice of Basingstoke, for the transfer of the parsonage house of the benefice of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel to the Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance for diocesan purposes and for the future patronage arrangements for the new benefice. It also provides for the number of churchwardens to the new parish to be limited to two (the default position would otherwise require ten given that there is a parish church and four parish centres of worship within the area of the proposed parish).</p>	
<p>Number of benefices and parishes</p>	<p>Two single-parish benefices. Basingstoke parish has one parish church, two chapels of ease, and a licensed place of worship. Popley has one licensed place of worship (St Gabriel's).</p>
<p>Number of representations or comments received</p>	<p>The draft Scheme attracted three representations against and 20 in favour.</p>
<p>Based on a deanery plan? If so, an approved one? Or also relying on s6/21 consultations due to any material changes?</p>	<p>Not based on a deanery plan but part of the diocesan projects under the Strategic Development Fund banner for church planting, and also part of the diocesan response to the financial and resource challenges brought about by Covid and the subsequent financial crisis.</p>

<p>Diocesan rationale in brief</p>	<p>Following the departure of the longstanding incumbent of Popley, there is an opportunity for the revitalisation of the parish. Basingstoke resource church is best placed to support the revitalisation, and it is planned that a member of the ministry team will live in the house which is currently the Popley parsonage following the union.</p> <p>The PCCs of both parishes are supportive of these proposals.</p>
<p>Main themes in the representations and any unusual factors</p>	<p>The representors against argue that two churchwardens for the proposed parish is not adequate, and that the views and needs of the Popley St Gabriel's congregation could be sidelined, and that the proposals are driven by the HTB plant at Basingstoke.</p> <p>Those in favour of the proposals generally see the proposed union as a good thing for both parishes, and as an excellent use of joint resources.</p>
<p>Sifting decision</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Possible decisions</p>	<p>(i) To allow the scheme to proceed as drafted; (ii) To decide that the scheme should not be made; (iii) To refer the scheme back to the diocese for further consideration; (iv) To agree to exercise the Committee's powers to allow the scheme to proceed subject to certain amendments being made under section 10(3) to which the Bishop has to agree (e.g. increasing the number of churchwardens to, say, three).</p>

Attached are:

Annex A: A copy of the draft Pastoral Scheme;

Annex B: A scaled map of the area;

Annex C: Parish information forms for the two parishes;

Annex D: A copy of the letter referring the representation to the Bishop of Winchester together with a copy of the diocesan response;

Annex R: Copies of the representations;

Annex S: Supplementary comments received from a representor against and two in favour, with the Diocesan response to these.

Background

1. The Basingstoke benefice is an ancient one listed in Liber Regis in 1786 as being a vicarage. St Michael's is listed as its parish church. The parish also contains two chapels of ease of All Saints, Basingstoke; and St Peter, Basingstoke South Ham, together with a licensed place of worship known as Christ the King, Basingstoke Brighton Hill.
2. In 1974, a team ministry was established for the area of this benefice, with the cure of souls to be shared by a team rector and five team vicars (this was subsequently reduced to three by the 2014 Scheme referred to below). The rector was to be presented by a patronage board of which the members were the Bishop of Winchester; the Archdeacon of Winchester; the vicars in the team ministry; Magdalen College, Oxford; and the Basingstoke PCC – all with one vote each.
3. The benefice and parish of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel was created in 2014 out of part of the area of the Basingstoke parish. That Scheme designated one of the Basingstoke team vicars as its first incumbent, living in the then glebe house at Tewkesbury Close, Popley which was brought into the Popley benefice's ownership as its parsonage house by this Scheme, and for the Bishop of Winchester to be the new benefice's sole patron.
4. The Parish Information Forms supplied by the parishes show the populations and electoral rolls of the two parishes affected by these proposals:

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Electoral Roll</u>	<u>Staffing/lay assistance</u>
Basingstoke	46,000	409	Incumbent Associate vicars x 2 (ordained, stipendiary) Curates x 2 (ordained, stipendiary) Operations Director x 1 (laity, employed) Worship Pastor x 1 (laity, employed) Rising Generations Lead x 1 (laity, employed) Rising Generations Pastor x 1 (laity, employed) Administrator x 1 (laity, employed) Facilities manager x 1 (laity, employed) Bookkeeper x 1 (laity, employed) LLMs x 4 (laity, volunteer) BCM x 1 Creation Care (laity, volunteer) BCM Pastoral x 1 (laity, volunteer) BCM Children, Families & Youth x 1 (laity, volunteer) Total: 19, but potentially increasing to 25
Popley	15,586	39	Parish administrator (to continue going forward)
TOTAL	61,586	448	No reductions proposed. The Basingstoke PCC will be taking a vote on 16 December 2024 on whether the current

'BCM' = Bishop's Commission for Mission

provision is to be increased by additional lay assistance.

5. In terms of church traditions and characteristics of the style of worship, Basingstoke parish says it has a light touch Anglo-Catholic tradition which features in its worship, liturgy, choral setting and a focus on the sacrament as the moment of encounter.
6. The Popley parish describes itself as Liberal, evangelical with contemporary worship music.
7. The draft Scheme carried the following footnotes:

The parsonage house at 25 Tewkesbury Close, Basingstoke

As a benefice can only have one parsonage house at any given time, clause 8 provides for the parsonage house of the benefice of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel to be transferred to the Winchester DBF for diocesan purposes. It is the diocesan intention that it will be let commercially until 2025 when it will be used as the place of residence for a training curate assigned to the benefice.

Status of churches, parish centres of worship and number of churchwardens

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

All Saints, Basingstoke and St Peter, South Ham Basingstoke are both chapels of ease, i.e. consecrated for regular public worship, and additionally were designated as parish centres of worship in 1989 and will remain so.

Christ the King, Brighton Hill Basingstoke and St Gabriel, Popley are both licenced places of worship, and are also designated as parish centres of worship in 1989 and will remain so.

Notwithstanding there will be one parish church and four parish centres of worship in the new parish, there will be two churchwardens in total for the proposed parish. Section 41(5) of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 allows for such provision which takes precedence over the Churchwardens Measure 2001 requirement that each parish church (and any parish centre of worship under the provisions of s43(2) of the 2011 Measure) has two churchwardens.

It is the intention here that each church/parish centre of worship will have informal volunteers who will be appointed locally to assist the churchwardens.

Summary of the representations against

8. The representors against express three main areas of concern:
 - (i) the number of churchwardens is not sufficient;
 - (ii) the views and needs of the Popley St Gabriel's congregation's being sidelined in the proposed arrangements; and
 - (iii) other areas of concern.

The number of churchwardens for the new parish to be limited to two

9. The main concern is that two churchwardens will not be sufficient for the proposed parish which will have five places of worship (namely, a parish church, two chapels of ease and two licensed places of worship – the latter two groupings designated as parish centres of worship, thereby expected to have two churchwardens **each**), an electoral roll in excess of 500 for a population of some 50,000 people spread over a geographically dispersed, densely populated and diverse area.
10. There is suggestion that the population is actually some three and half times larger than the 50,000 cited above, at around 185,200, and that in 1958 when the population was around 26,000 there were four churchwardens over five sites, so the proposed two only now would place too great a burden on them. *[The 2021 Census figures show the Basingstoke parish having a population of 46,373, and for Popley 15,586.]*
11. It is unclear how the roles of the churchwardens as described in the Winchester diocese's website could be fulfilled were they to be limited to two:

“The role of the churchwarden is extremely varied but generally involves management, maintenance and mission in accordance with the Churchwardens Measure 2001 and the Canons of the Church of England. They are the foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent, and they have a duty to maintain order and decency in the church and churchyard, particularly during the times of divine service. In co-operation with the incumbent, churchwardens are generally responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the parish.”

12. How could they represent the laity the majority of whom they could not possibly know? Their election would be almost impossible to be fair or democratically sustainable as the majority of candidates would be unknown to the majority of the parishioners.

St Gabriel, Popley's needs are being sidelined in the proposed arrangements

13. There is a view that the number of churchwardens is being purposefully limited to two to exclude others from the decision making process for the proposed parish.
14. A 'consultative group' of laity and ministers has been established within one congregation only, its existence of which is not widely known, nor are the possible presence of other groups. It has no terms of reference, its members' names are not public, the outcome of their discussions are not published, and they are not elected by the congregation it is understood they are expected to represent. Previously, elected

District Church Councils have performed this role with full, robust and transparent governance.

Other areas of concern

15. There is a suspicion that these proposals are driven by the Holy Trinity, Brompton plant at Basingstoke. HTB has not made any effort to reach out to St Gabriel's congregation, and has refused to discuss the future intentions; this needs to change.
16. Which church will prospective new worshippers from Popley be directed to? HTB has yet to address this.
17. The diocesan rationale for these proposals are said to be flawed, as St Gabriel's had previously been told by the Bishop of Basingstoke that it was a beacon which all parishes should aspire to.
18. It certainly does not need any revitalisation as it already has a vibrant worshipping congregation with outreach to its community, and has managed to flourish notwithstanding it has not had its own incumbent for two years.
19. St Gabriel's always has at least one service on a Sunday; some in the HTB group do not and there is concern that its type and frequency of services may not be maintained in the proposed arrangements.
20. There is a concern that proper consideration had not been given to the six+ schools located in the St Gabriel's parish: how would any dedicated minister/pastor work with these?

Summary of representations in favour

21. The Rev John Hudson explains why the team ministry in place for the Basingstoke benefice has not worked as intended: this was due to a difference of vision and direction between the team vicar looking after that part of the parish and the team rector at the time, with each of the five places of worship ("PoW") which meant they worked separately and were not thriving.
22. In the last two years since he has been the team rector all four PoW in his Basingstoke parish have been brought together and he has seen them all flourish and thrive as a result.
23. Removing the burden of local District Church Councils from the churches on the estate communities has seen them able to focus on reaching people, which has resulted in congregations rising at South Ham and Brighton Hill from an average of 25 per Sunday to now above 150.
24. Working together, the town centre Civic church and the estate communities has proven the key for success. As Popley is another estate community, he sees it as a key strategic and pastoral move to bring them back into the parish.

25. He explains that the level and type of service available at St Gabriel's is still to be decided, but this will be driven largely by local need from each congregation.
26. With regards the number of churchwardens, he says that finding people to fill these roles is incredibly difficult. Even his parish with its £1m+ turnover, a staff team and four buildings, with an average Sunday congregation of 550, struggles to find enough people with the unique skillsets to fill these roles: of its eight churchwarden roles, only six have been filled for this year.
27. He too cites the Winchester Diocesan website with regards the roles of churchwardens and says that there has to be close and good working relationships between them and the incumbent. Were this number not restricted as per the proposals, there would potentially be ten. This would be too large a number to manage effectively, particularly with many having full time jobs, and the complexities of the parish and the required number and frequency of meetings involved.
28. A working group was set up to see what tasks which were normally undertaken by churchwardens had already been delegated. Many of the day-to-day management tasks of the parish has been delegated to a staff team, and the buildings oversight is done by a mixture of a full-time paid Facilities Manager together with a series of working groups, which includes churchwardens together with lay people with specialist knowledge and expertise.
29. Over the last two years there has been a significant and sustained growth, and each building has up to three services. This meant that the expectations on the churchwardens to fulfil that task of Sunday support were unrealistic, so the working group recommended to the PCC the creation of lay volunteer role, called Sunday Support, to assist at each service.
30. This meant the churchwarden retained the legal responsibilities and the had oversight of Sunday services; the Basingstoke PCC was satisfied with this solution. He thought two churchwardens would be sufficient on this basis.
31. With regards laity representation, he says that each of the Sunday services has two service pastors, who are a combination of lay and ordained. This, coupled with the steering group for each service, which is made up of lay representatives, provides a way for the congregations to be involved.
32. In connection with the make-up of the PCC, Mr Hudson says that the locally agreed scheme that has been in place since 1995 stipulating equal representation from each of the places of worship in the parish is not fit for purpose. The representation was not proportional, as there was a big difference in average attendance, and the smaller churches were not able to recruit a sufficient number of officers. It is also unbalanced in terms of representatives from the congregation; some have one whilst others have three.
33. He has also been meeting with both the Basingstoke PCC and the Popley PCC to walk towards the current proposals. Both PCCs were keen for people from both PCCs on the new PCC, with some from the Basingstoke one happy to stand down to allow space for those from Popley, including in connection with deanery representation. This shows the commitment from both PCCs to doing the proposed pastoral reorganisation well, and is not a heavy handed takeover of Popley by Basingstoke.

Additional points raised in the other representations in support

34. Those in favour generally see the proposed union as a good thing for both parishes, and as an excellent use of joint resources. As an example, Popley will have access to a team of clergy who have already been successful in offering a variety of different services and activities for the population of Basingstoke, especially working within the estates of South Ham and Brighton Hill, and will be able to expand mission to the Popley estate in particular.
35. The HTB team in Basingstoke has been shown to be successful in energising and introducing new worshippers while not totally alienating the traditionalists; many at Popley and its environs will benefit from this approach and the link back to the wider Basingstoke Church. It would also be a positive step for St Gabriel's providing security as well as new opportunities, particularly as its benefice has not had its own vicar for two years.
36. The Rev Denis Smith says that as a retired clergy with PTO, he has helped in all the churches concerned during the period of clergy vacancies in Basingstoke. Leading services at St Peter's, Christ the King, St Michael's and St Gabriel's and helping with music at All Saints, he has seen the positive impact that the Resource Church has made by retaining the traditional styles of worship whilst creating new innovative styles.
37. He lives on the Rooksdown estate, which has at present only two families worshipping at St Gabriel's. Rooksdown would benefit from the focus on new estates via the new estates worker and the two schools would be served by the schools worker, as would the other schools in the present parish. The Resource Church could also liberate the potential for new worship activities on Rooksdown.
38. St Gabriel's would benefit by being part of this movement, by allowing its current freedom and enthusiasm in liturgical worship to continue, whilst allowing as well for new innovation. It has a long tradition of being a multicultural church with the mix of ethnic groups giving a vibrancy and life which then gives life to the liturgy. This would be a great resource to the new parish in holding together differing styles of worship. St Gabriel's would benefit from being part of a larger group and being less isolated: it has much to offer as well as receive.
39. Eleanor Woolf says she remembers when St Gabriel's was part of the team ministry in Basingstoke and was sad when it elected to go its own way. Her only concern is for the wellbeing of the clergy and worries that they may be spread too thinly, which she has raised with the PCC.
40. Mr Allan Palmer in his original submission did have concerns on the number of churchwardens being limited to two, including the fear that they will only have a focus on the PoW that they attend regularly, and the other three PoW of the parish will not be as well managed. He subsequently clarified that he is in favour of the proposed union of the two parishes but was just seeking clarification on the number of churchwardens, and on the representation of all the PoW on the new PCC. He had since had a positive discussion with one of the current churchwardens and was looking forward to the draft scheme being approved in due course.

The Diocesan response

41. Copies of the representations were sent to the Bishop of Winchester to seek his response on the representations and the matter generally. The response is submitted by the diocese on the Bishop's behalf, with input from the Reverend John Hudson, the team rector of the Basingstoke benefice, and incumbent-designate of the proposed one.
42. The diocese explains that when Covid arrived in early 2020, the effects of the pandemic and numerous lockdowns soon became evident. The then Bishop of Winchester convened a Resilience Taskforce to determine the number of stipendiary posts which could be supported by the WDBF to circa 120. At the time, bishops, archdeacons, and numerous heads of departments met extensively with deanery leadership to determine the response to these unprecedented challenges. Deanery leadership were robust in their responses to initial proposals which were adjusted over a period of several months.
43. In the meantime, under a diocesan-wide Strategic Development Plan to church plant into the largest of their population centres, Basingstoke parish was identified as a priority. A new incumbent (Team Rector), Mr Hudson, was appointed in September 2022 to revitalise and grow the mission and ministry of the church in the city of Basingstoke. The diocesan senior leadership firmly believes that a single parish benefice for the centre of Basingstoke allows for a unified vision and focus to be applied strategically over a larger area.
44. These proposals are, however, carefully considered both through the wider diocesan lens, and at a local level. Thus, while the initiative for this may not have come directly from the parishes, it has been warmly endorsed by the two PCCs.
45. The diocese explains the history and says that in 1974, a team ministry was established for the Basingstoke benefice, together with district church councils, and over the course of the next thirty years or so, the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the team ebbed and flowed. In 2022, the Basingstoke DCCs were dissolved and a single PCC now leads and drives the vision for the parish.
46. In 2014, the new parish/benefice of Popley with Limes Park and Rooksdown, St Gabriel's was created. The number of team vicars at Basingstoke parish was reduced in the same scheme from five to three.
47. Mr Hudson argues that the 2014 scheme should be reversed because it led to each of the five worship centres in the parish working separately, which led to declining attendance, and on the estates communities, significant struggles to run the churches, with work falling to a small number of committed but exhausted people.
48. It was therefore better to move Popley, an estate community, back into the wider parish of Basingstoke to help it thrive in its mission and outreach and look to work for a future that mirrors the work already done at their churches in South Ham and Brighton Hill.

49. In connection with the proposals currently under consideration, the diocese says that during PCC meetings when the Archdeacon was present, the Popley PCC has responded positively to the option of joining with Basingstoke, particularly in relation to the resources available in such areas as youth and children's work, clergy cover and lessening the responsibilities of governance. Between meetings some congregation members at Popley still expressed hopes of having their own dedicated vicar, a view the Popley PCC conveyed to ensure it was heard by senior leadership for full transparency. The draft scheme, however, remains fully supported by the senior leadership in the diocese, deanery leadership and both PCCs.
50. A re-united parish of Basingstoke, under the leadership of an invigorated church planting ministry team, could bring new vision and mission to this large city centre parish. Basingstoke parish has opportunities both for student evangelism and estates ministry. Since the re-launch of Basingstoke parish under the church planting team led by Mr Hudson, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of people attending their services. This increase is testament to the team recognising the local need and meeting that need – it is, in fact, the very opposite of imposing their will or their way on the local population.
51. Clergy well-being is of paramount importance to senior diocesan leadership with surveys conducted regularly, and programmes of coaching, mentoring and supervision already in development alongside access to a comprehensive support package from [Health Assured](#) which is available to all clergy (plus staff and Parish Support Officers). Overall, the parish/benefice of Basingstoke has a staff team of approximately seventeen. At no time in its history has it been so well resourced.
52. The diocese provides details of the clerical and other support currently available to both benefices, which does not take account of any additional support offered by retired clergy with PTO in either benefice. It believes that Popley St Gabriel will be amply provided for by the five ordained licensed ministers from Basingstoke parish. It also believes that the abundance of lay ministry across both parishes is a blessing to be nurtured and developed further.
53. The proposed scheme has taken account of ministry to local schools across the wider Basingstoke and Popley areas. The combined ministry team will be able to provide a comprehensive and cohesive approach which will include schools engagement. Basingstoke parish is fortunate enough to have a Rising Generations Lead and a Rising Generations Pastor, and ample opportunity for school engagement and after school activities within their churches: [Featured events — Basingstoke Church](#).
54. The diocese provides details of the Common Mission Fund (parish share) for the period 2020 to 2023 which shows that the Basingstoke parish meets its call, whilst the Popley one struggles to do so, even when it had its own incumbent. More recently, in 2023 it had a call of £21,744 but only paid £15,000, whereas Basingstoke's call was £107,282 which was met (less 39p).

55. Also provided are statistics on other aspects too, like 'Usual Sunday Attendance' and occasional offices. In response to some queries raised on this by the Commissioners' staff, the diocese has advised that the data cannot be confirmed to be accurate prior to 2023, as the DCCs in Basingstoke parish did not always provide the information requested, which was one of the reasons why they were disbanded in 2022.
56. Mr Hudson and both PCCs have taken careful consideration of the need to ensure Popley PCC is fully represented in the proposed new parish. Some people on the Basingstoke PCC have indicated to the PCC Secretary there that they would stand down when the scheme goes through, to allow space for Popley people. It is understood that three Popley people have informally indicated that they are willing to stand for the new PCC and for a deanery post to ensure representation in the transition.
57. The intention is for Popley to have a steering group and service pastor. In conversations with the existing PCC in Popley several people have indicated a desire to form an initial steering group. The Reverend Libby Etherington, who is associate vicar in Basingstoke, will be the service pastor, so plans for this representation are well advanced. The PCCs in both parishes have worked hard to make plans for a future of a strong and truly representative governance structure made up of a PCC with the right skills and a structure of steering groups providing representation.
58. The diocese has carefully considered the issues around the number of church wardens required. Given the capacity provided through the staff team and the additional arrangements which include dedicated Sunday volunteers etc., the diocese concluded that 2 churchwardens was sufficient to provide strategic oversight and leadership. It had been difficult to fill vacancies locally; Basingstoke PCC has managed to fill only six of the eight churchwarden roles in the parish, despite having a congregation with an average Sunday attendance of 550.
59. With regards the type and variety of services, the diocese says that Mr Hudson has explained that there has been a huge variety of services offered in the past two years across the Basingstoke parish as they have worked more closely together, with all the major festivals being marked and the full spectrum of an Anglican offering being available. Decisions on which worship to do where and when have been driven largely by the local need expressed by each congregation and by the experience of trying things and seeing what people will actually attend. As they hope to begin to work with Popley it is Mr Hudson's personal commitment to do the same at St Gabriel's.
60. It is the focus of the ministry team to revitalise each of the churches in their local communities. The legal status of the churches is of minor importance to the mission and ministry of the team/parishes. A change of designation now would have been seen as a downgrading of status. This was not and is not the aim of the proposals. All of the churches and their congregations are of equal status and equal importance.
61. With regards considering other options here, the diocese says that experiences of team ministries in Winchester Diocese have not been wholly successful in the past. Having recently dissolved the district church councils in the parish of Basingstoke in order to reduce administration, options such as a plurality or a joint council were seen as adding an unnecessary layer of complexity to the parish structure. As a parish on

its own, an incumbent in Popley would likely continue to struggle to find the support and resource needed to meet the size of the challenge and opportunities.

62. The diocese explains that careful consideration of these proposals has resulted in an interregnum of just over two years for the Popley benefice, with the right of presentation to it suspended in order to allow time for these conversations to take place. However, during that time the ministry team at Basingstoke has informally been offering assistance at Popley to support their congregation and to build a strong connection.

63. The diocese lists the timeline for consultations here as follows:

Early 2023 – informal discussions took place at a local level between bishop, archdeacon, deanery leadership and the Basingstoke incumbent. The Archdeacon met specifically with Popley PCC in March 2023;

Summer 2023 – discussions continued and the Archdeacon met specifically with the Popley PCC in May 2023;

September 2023 – the Archdeacon met again with the Popley PCC to outline the draft proposals. No major issues were identified. The PCC voted unanimously in favour of the proposals;

November 2023 – DMPC approval of draft proposals;

December 2023 – formal section 6 consultations opened; no adverse comments or responses received.

Supplementary views of the representors

64. Supplementary comments were received from Mike Browning who was against the proposed Scheme, together with two from the Reverend Denis Smith and Jeremy Jackman, who were both in favour of the proposed Scheme.

65. Mr Browning queries the true population figures for the ecclesiastical parishes concerned, which he feels to be just over 50,000.

66. Mr Smith says that some of the concerns raised by John Wilson were indeed concerns raised by a minority at of St Gabriel's congregation members, but they were then discussed with the individuals concerned, and a more positive attitude to the change had now emerged.

67. Mr Jackman seeks clarification on who specifically will be maintaining St Gabriel's, Popley, its grounds and dealing with its day-to-day matters under the proposed arrangements. Who will decide on how the finances will work under the proposed union? Will those specifically attending St Gabriel's have a proper say in this process?

68. Will those from Popley always have appropriate representation on the PCC of the proposed parish? Will this number be three members on the new PCC for the foreseeable future or some other number?

69. How will work done by the "Rising Generations Lead" and "Rising Generations Pastor" in Popley schools feed into St. Gabriel's?
70. He would like a definite statement on which church/place of worship baptism families and newcomers will be directed towards.

Supplementary Diocesan response

71. The Diocese confirms the population figures of the ecclesiastical parishes as being around 46,373 for Basingstoke, and 15,586 for Popley. Some of the larger numbers suggested relate to the local authority area of Basingstoke and Deane.
72. It explains that St Gabriel's, Popley will, along with all of the other buildings of the parish, be the responsibility of the churchwardens and PCC of the new parish. On a day-to-day basis, St Gabriel's will be looked after by the Operations Director and her team, including a Facilities Manager, an Administrator and the Administrator currently employed by St Gabriel's, whose employment is proposed to be transferred to the new parish.
73. Legally, responsibility for finance will ultimately rest with the PCC of the new parish. The current Basingstoke PCC is supported by a finance working group.
74. The new PCC will be made up of those who stand and are elected. The purpose of the PCC is to promote the mission of God in the whole parish, which will equally include Popley. If the PCC in any way does not represent Popley, it will be failing in its mission.
75. Basingstoke PCC has a strategic aim to continue to expand the number of schools that it connects with. It has added around seven schools to that growing list in this calendar year; this work will cover the whole parish.
76. Families and newcomers will be welcome to request to have a baptism at the church within the parish that they attend or to which they feel most connected.
77. The diocese provides a breakdown of the clergy and staff team currently, and as envisaged. This stands at around 19 currently but could rise to 23 shortly to take account of the vacancies for a Worship Pastor, a Rising Generations Pastor, a new Finance Manager (starting in December), together with a BCM-in-Training (volunteer). The Basingstoke PCC will be voting at its meeting to be held on 16 December 2024 on whether there should be some additional lay roles to those already listed.
78. It explains that the Bishop's Commission for Mission (BCM) is a diocesan-wide learning programme designed for laity who would like to develop and grow their existing ministry. There are currently 415 laity across the diocese who hold a Bishop's Commission for Mission, with a further 78 are currently attending training. Those who hold a BCM play an integral role in their benefice ministry teams.
79. The diocese is not clear what the reference to a 'consultative group' in the representations relates to, but it could be a misinterpretation of the congregational/Sunday service representation. It says that each of the Sunday services has two service pastors, who are a combination of lay and ordained

individuals. This, coupled with the steering group for each service, which is made up of lay representatives, provides a conduit for representation of the views of the congregations, in a more comprehensive way than any one churchwarden could do on their own. However, these steering groups have been established for each congregation, not just one.

80. It also draws attention to the timeline previously provided on the consultation process, and reiterates that this draft scheme has the full support of the PCC of Basingstoke and Popley St Gabriel

Information for the Committee

81. The section 6 local consultations on the interested parties was undertaken by the diocese on 7 December 2023 involving the statutory consultees, which includes PCCs, but not individual congregations or other members. Any suggestion of any local 'consultative group' perhaps not including those from Popley is entirely a separate matter and not to be conflated with the 2011 Measure process which has been fully met.

Issues for the Committee

- (i) Have these proposals been brought forward for a proper purpose?
- (ii) Has the consultation process met the requirements of the Measure?
- (iii) Does the proposed new benefice and parish take sufficient account of the parishes' needs, traditions and characteristics, particularly of those at St Gabriel's, Popley? Was alternative reorganisation considered and are there good reasons for preferring this draft Scheme?
- (iv) Will the number of churchwardens being limited to two disproportionately detrimentally affect the Popley parish?
- (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?

For decision

67. These are the main possible outcomes:

- (i) To allow the scheme to proceed as drafted;
- (ii) To decide that the scheme should not be made;
- (iii) To refer the scheme back to the diocese for further consideration;
- (iv) To agree to exercise the Committee's powers to allow the scheme to proceed subject to certain amendments being made under section 10(3) to which the Bishop has to agree (e.g. increasing the number of churchwardens to, say, three).

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4 December 2024