



GUIDELINES FOR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS AND INCUMBENTS ON:

- 1. ENACTING RESOLUTIONS A & B IN THE PRIESTS (ORDINATION OF WOMEN) MEASURE 1993**

 - 2. PETITIONING THE DIOCESAN BISHOP IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EPISCOPAL MINISTRY ACT OF SYNOD 1993 (often called 'Resolution C')**
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1. PRIESTS (ORDINATION OF WOMEN) MEASURE 1993

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this section of the paper is to advise members of PCCs and Parish Priests of their legal rights under the above Measure to ensure that women who have been lawfully ordained priest cannot:

- a) Preside at, or Celebrate the Holy Communion or pronounce the Absolution in the parish

and / or

- b) Become the incumbent, priest-in-charge or team vicar.

1.2 OPTIONS

A PCC can pass one or both of the resolutions. Wherever possible we would urge PCCs to pass ***both***. The resolutions are as follows:

Resolution A:

‘That this parochial church council would not accept a woman as the minister who presides at or celebrates the Holy Communion or pronounces the Absolution in the Parish.’

Resolution B:

‘That this parochial church council would not accept a woman as the incumbent or priest-in-charge of the benefice or as a team vicar for the benefice.’

- nb Some PCCs may consider they are alright with their present priest. That *may* be the case. However, you never know what disasters may occur and you **MUST** be planning for the future. It makes **NO** difference if the present priest agrees or not with the PCC. These are the legal rights of the PCC and the present priest is bound by the PCC.

There has been some confusion regarding the question of whether District Church Councils are able to pass the resolutions. Currently, there exist two varieties of Team Ministry:

Some will be United Benefices with one *united* parish and one PCC and a number of District Church Councils; in these cases, *only* the PCC can pass the two resolutions ***under the Measure***, although there is ***nothing*** to prevent a DCC passing the resolutions in order to make clear to the diocesan that the ministry of women priests would not be welcome at the church in question. We therefore advise DCC's to pass the resolutions and send them to the Bishop and the Team Rector.

Other Team Ministries will be United Benefices with a number of parishes and PCC's; in these cases, *each* PCC has the right under the Measure to pass the resolutions, in the same way as any single parish or conventional district.

If in doubt, pass the resolutions anyway!

1.3 WARNING!!!

Resolution A cannot be considered by a PCC **if**;

“...the incumbent or priest-in-charge of the benefice concerned, or any team vicar or assistant curate for that benefice, is a woman ordained to the office of priest.”

SO!

If there is currently a woman deacon working as a team vicar or assistant curate in any of the parishes of the benefice to which your parish belongs, as soon as she is ordained as priest, **NO** parish within the benefice is allowed even to consider Resolution A. If therefore there is a woman deacon in your benefice, you will need to act even more quickly than elsewhere.

In many cases, Bishops, Archdeacons, Rural or Area Deans and even incumbents will urge you **not** to act quickly. Take no notice of them. They are trying to hood wink you!

Always remember, in benefices comprising more than one parish, if any ***one* PCC passes RESOLUTION B, that decision binds *all* the parishes involved.**

The pressure that will be put on you, not to bind other parishes in the benefice, should not be underestimated. **Do not be led astray by promises and fine words. The only real safeguard you have is the one included in the legislation, specifically to protect YOU.** So do your best to pass **both** resolutions.

FINAL WARNING!!!

BEWARE, too of any solicitous suggestions by archdeacons that it would be appropriate that they should be present at or "**chair**" any meetings of PCCs at which these Resolutions are due to be considered. There is **nothing** in the women priests' legislation which requires or provides for such an arrangement. Neither is there any such provision in the Church Representation Rules in these circumstances; indeed, it would be illegal.

1.4 PROCEDURE

It is vital that you follow the rules as laid down in the legislation. You must not make up your own way of doing it, or you can be challenged.

- a) The meeting must be called with **at least four weeks notice**, stating the time and place of the meeting and that the **purpose** of the meeting is to discuss the resolutions. Remember that it is a legal requirement (for all PCC meetings!) that a notice, signed by or on behalf of the Chairman of the PCC or the persons convening the meeting, *must* be posted at or near the principal door *of every* church, or building licensed for public worship in the parish. **Do NOT take shortcuts!**
- b) The agenda should set out clearly the texts of the motions to be proposed. The wording above (in paragraph 2) is correct. **You should not change the wording.**
- c) **At least half of the PCC** entitled to be there **must be present.**
- d) **A simple majority** (51%) is all that is required to pass the motions.
- e) Copies of the agreed Resolutions **must** be sent to the:
 - i) **Bishop** of the Diocese concerned.
 - ii) **Rural/Area Dean** of the Deanery concerned.
 - iii) **Lay-chairman** of the deanery synod concerned.
 - iv) **Registrar** of the Diocese concerned.
 - v) **Designated Officer** for the diocese concerned, within the meaning of section 7 (5) of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986.
 - vi) **Registered patron** of the benefice concerned, within the meaning of section 39 (1) of that Measure.

2. EPISCOPAL MINISTRY ACT OF SYNOD 1993 ('Resolution C')

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This section deals with the action which PCCs and Parish Priests must take in order to petition the Diocesan Bishop to the effect that appropriate episcopal duties in the parish should be carried out in accordance with the Act of Synod. Three types of arrangements may be made in order to provide an appropriate ministry for those who are opposed to the ordination of women to the priesthood:

- a) Diocesan Arrangements, whereby the Diocesan Bishop “shall make arrangements so far as possible for appropriate care and oversight of the clergy and parishes in the diocese.”
- b) Regional Arrangements, whereby the Diocesan Bishops of each region act jointly to nominate one or more bishops from within the region (and who are themselves opposed) who shall “be approved by the Archbishop of the Province to carry out for any parish in the region such episcopal duties as the Diocesan Bishop concerned may request.”
- c) Provincial Arrangements, whereby up to three Provincial Episcopal Visitors “shall carry out, or cause to be carried out, for any parish in the province such episcopal duties . . . as the Diocesan Bishop concerned may request.”

If you consider that the Diocesan Bishop's arrangements are *not* appropriate, say so!

2.2 PROCEDURE

The following procedure can **only** be followed if a resolution under Schedule 1 of the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure is *already* in force. It is therefore essential that PCC's deal with the resolutions as set out in Part 1 of this paper first and then call a *second* meeting, *after* copies of the resolutions have been sent to the parties listed at 1.4 e) above. If neither of the resolutions under the Measure has been passed, a PCC *cannot* petition the Diocesan Bishop under the Act of Synod.

Unlike the Measure, the Act of Synod does not lay down a form of words for the necessary resolution. A suitable form would be:

‘That the Parochial Church Council of xxx hereby resolves to petition the Bishop of xxx (nb - the *Diocesan Bishop*) to the effect that appropriate episcopal duties in the Parish of xxx should be carried out in accordance with the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993.’

The Secretary of the PCC **must** give at least four weeks' notice of the time and place of the meeting. **Ensure that notice is given in the correct form**, as set out at 1.4 a) above. **The Agenda *must* set out clearly the text of the motion to be proposed.**

If the motion is passed by a *simple majority*, send a copy to the Diocesan Bishop. Your PCC has *decided*. The Bishop may act, but he is not *bound* to unless:

- a) The meeting was attended at least **one half of the members of the PCC entitled to attend.**
- b) **At least two thirds of the members of the PCC present and voting were in favour of the petition.**
- c) The incumbent or priest in charge is in favour of the resolution, whether or not he was present and voted.