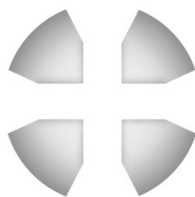


**Passing Resolutions
under
The House of Bishops' Declaration**

Advice to PCCs and Parish Priests

Second Edition, February 2016



FORWARDINFAITH

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Foreword

by the Chairman of Forward in Faith

Forward in Faith is publishing this first edition of our advice to PCCs and parish priests as a resource to support them in considering resolutions under the House of Bishops' Declaration. We are also making available

- a leaflet about the process for PCC members
- a card about the resolution for congregation members
- a leaflet about the theological reasons why ordaining women as bishops and priests is problematic.

Parishes that receive episcopal ministry from a bishop of The Society are invited to affiliate to The Society. We are therefore also circulating

- a leaflet about The Society and its relationship to Forward in Faith
- an application form for parish affiliation to The Society.

The provisions in the House of Bishops' Declaration replace those that were previously contained in the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 and the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 (for a comparison, see overleaf). For two years from 17 November 2014 (when the Declaration came into force) Resolutions A and B under the Measure and Petitions under the Act of Synod ('Resolution C') will be treated as if they were resolutions passed under Declaration.

This means that existing resolutions do not need to be replaced by a new resolution immediately. We recommend that there should first be a period of teaching and discussion, so that the PCC is well prepared to take a decision, and that the resolution itself should be considered later in 2015.

The ordination of women as bishops means that PCCs that in the past have not felt it necessary to consider a resolution (for example, because their priest was committed only to inviting male priests to minister in the parish) will now need to do so. We hope that this booklet and the supporting materials will be helpful to such parishes, as well as to those that already have resolutions in force.

In the Declaration, the House of Bishops has invited us to flourish within the Church of England's life and structures. Parishes should pass a resolution under the Declaration not as a means of distancing themselves from the rest of the Church of England, but as a response to the invitation to flourish within it.

This is the first edition of a booklet that we hope will continue to be useful – not least because of the advice that it offers in relation to vacancies and appointments. Suggestions for improvement should be sent to the Director of Forward in Faith, Dr Colin Podmore (colin.podmore@forwardinfaith.com).

✠ TONY PONTEFRACT
The Rt Revd Tony Robinson

December 2014

How do the new provisions compare with the 1993 Measure and Act of Synod?

In two respects, the arrangements under the Declaration are more favourable than those the under the 1993 Measure and the Act of Synod:

- Under the 1993 Measure, Resolution A could not be considered by a PCC if the incumbent or priest-in-charge, or any team vicar or assistant curate in the benefice, was a woman priest. There is no such restriction on the passing of a Resolution under the Declaration.
- Under the Act of Synod, if the incumbent or priest-in-charge was not in favour of a petition ('Resolution C') the diocesan bishop was not bound to accept it. There is no such restriction under the Declaration.

The requirements regarding the quorum and majorities are also different:

- Under the 1993 Measure, at least half of the PCC members had to be present, but only a simple majority of those present was required for Resolutions A and B to pass.
- Under the Act of Synod, a bishop was only obliged to act in accordance with a petition ('Resolution C') if at least half of the PCC attended and *two-thirds* of those present voted in favour.
- Under the Declaration, the minimum attendance is merely the normal PCC quorum, and the majority required is either a simple majority of those present (if two-thirds attend) or a simple majority of the whole membership of the PCC (if fewer than two-thirds attend).

So, for example, if there are 20 members of the PCC and all are present at the meeting, Resolution C would have required at least 14 to vote in favour, whereas a Resolution under the Declaration would only require 11 to vote in favour.

A further significant difference is that, under the 1993 Measure, if Resolution B was passed by one parish in a multi-parish benefice, that resolution bound all the parishes involved. On the other hand, if there was a woman priest ministering in any parish within the benefice, no parish could pass Resolution A (still less Resolution 'C'). The effect of this was commonly that catholic parishes in multi-parish benefices were placed under great pressure to rescind resolutions. When they refused to do so, break-up of the benefice could result. Neither restriction now applies.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In this document we offer advice on passing a Resolution under the House of Bishops' *Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests*. Forward in Faith will monitor the implementation of the Declaration and this document will be reviewed in the light of experience.
- 1.2 Resolutions under the Declaration can apply not only to the appointment of parish priests and assistant clergy but also to occasional ministry in a parish. It is not only bishops who are bound by the Declaration. The Declaration says that 'anyone involved' in making appointments or allowing 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' (para. 23).
- 1.3 We recommend that the Resolution should be considered by the PCC
- ideally, before a woman is appointed as a bishop in the diocese concerned (so that the resolution is a general statement of the PCC's position and cannot be viewed as an ungracious response to the appointment of a particular individual)
 - after teaching and discussion in the parish.
- 1.4 The House of Bishops has also issued a *Guidance Note for Bishops and Parishes*. The covering note to this Guidance Note states: 'This is, as its title makes clear, a guidance note. It neither adds to nor subtracts from the contents of the Declaration.'
- ! ► Any attempt to give the Guidance Note a status that it does not claim to possess should be resisted.
- 1.5 *The Resolution of Disputes Procedure Regulations 2014*, made by the House of Bishops under Canon C 29, set out a procedure for the resolution of disputes arising from the arrangements for which the House of Bishops' Declaration makes provision.
- 1.6 The texts of these three official documents may be accessed from this page: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/about-general-synod/house-of-bishops/declaration-on-the-ministry-of-bishops-and-priests.aspx>, which also gives details of the Independent Reviewer appointed under the Regulations.
- 1.7 PDF files of this booklet, together with a commentary on the official documents and links to them are available from this page of the Forward in Faith website: www.forwardinfaith.com/resources/women-bishops.html Additional tools to help ensure legal requirements are followed are available from this page of the Forward in Faith website: www.forwardinfaith.com/Advice.php
- ! ► 1.7 If a parish is concerned that the Declaration has not been complied with, advice should be sought from the Society Bishop's Representative for the diocese and, if necessary, from the Forward in Faith office. The names and contact details of the Bishops' Representatives may be found on the Dioceses pages of the Society website (www.sswsh.com).

2. The Five Guiding Principles

- 2.1 Fundamental to the arrangements set forth in the House of Bishops' Declaration are the Five Guiding Principles contained in paragraph 5 of the Declaration.

Statement of Guiding Principles

The House reaffirms the five guiding principles which it first commended in May 2013 when submitting legislative proposals to the General Synod for the consecration of women to the episcopate and which the Synod welcomed in its resolution of 20 November 2013. They need to be read one with the other and held together in tension, rather than being applied selectively:

- [1] Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;**
- [2] Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;**
- [3] Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;**
- [4] Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and**
- [5] Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.**

- 2.2 The Principles affirm the legitimacy of our position within the Church of England. Though the first two principles reflect a situation that falls short of our ideal, on closer examination they are less challenging than they might appear. For a brief commentary which explains this, see Annex B to this document.

3. Applying the Five Guiding Principles

3.1 Paragraphs 6 to 15 of the Declaration explain how ‘the outworking of these principles needs to be accompanied by simplicity, reciprocity and mutuality’.

3.2 Key points for parishes include the following:

- Canonical obedience does not require a priest or deacon to obey a direction that the law does not authorize a bishop to give (para. 7: note).
- We should co-operate with those with whom we differ (and they with us) and share as much as we can in mission and ministry within our dioceses. By calling for co-operation ‘to the maximum possible extent’, the Declaration implicitly recognizes that there will be limits to such co-operation (para. 9).
- There will need to be an acknowledgement that the differences of view which persist stem from an underlying divergence of theological conviction (para. 9).
- Those of differing conviction should ‘do all within their power to avoid giving offence to each other’ (para. 10).
- ‘There will need to be sensitivity to the feelings of vulnerability that some will have that their position within the Church of England will gradually be eroded and that others will have because not everyone will receive their ministry’ (para. 10).
- ‘Mutuality reflects the Church of England’s wider commitment to sustaining diversity. It means that those of differing conviction will be committed to making it possible for each other to flourish’ (para. 14). Therefore, bishops and others in authority will need to be able to demonstrate (if necessary to the Independent Reviewer) that their decisions in respect of parishes are directed towards ‘sustaining diversity’.
- ‘All should play a full part in the lives of the deaneries and dioceses and be prepared to engage with the diocesan bishop whoever he or she is’ (para. 14).
- ‘Equal treatment, for example in relation to resource issues... is essential irrespective of convictions in relation to gender and ministry’ (para. 15). Therefore, Resolution parishes must be treated fairly where the allocation of financial resources, clergy and curacies are concerned.

3.3 The key commitments for ordinands are:

- ‘In discerning vocations bishops will continue not to discriminate on the grounds of a candidate’s theological convictions on this issue (para. 15).
- ‘Ordination services for deacons and priests should be planned and conducted in a way that is consistent with the five guiding principles’ (para. 15)

These statements apply to all ordinands, whether or not their title parish has passed a Resolution under the Declaration. (Para. 15 is a general provision; it is not part of the ‘Arrangements for Parishes’.) The second point may be interpreted as follows. Ordinations are conducted under the authority of the diocesan bishop, and the archdeacon (male or female) has the right to present the candidates (Principle 1). But ordinands cannot flourish (Principle 4), and sacramental provision cannot be made (Principle 5), if the arrangements (for example, concerning presidency and the laying on of hands) violate the consciences of those who are to be ordained.

4. Arrangements for Parishes

4.1 The arrangements for parishes are set out in paragraphs 16 to 29 of the Declaration.

16. The House is committed to enabling parishes in one part of the country to receive broadly comparable and consistent arrangements to those provided in another, notwithstanding differences in the culture and ethos of particular dioceses or the approach of the relevant diocesan bishop.
17. The practical outworking of the arrangements may vary according to local circumstances but the approach commended in the following paragraphs will, in the view of the House, enable all dioceses and parishes to act consistently with the guiding principles set out above and the requirements of the law, including the Equality Act 2010.
18. The responsibility for signalling that a parish wishes to take advantage of arrangements available to those whose theological conviction leads them to seek the priestly or episcopal ministry of men rests with the relevant parochial church council ('PCC').²
19. A meeting of a PCC to consider a motion seeking arrangements of this kind should either be one held under section 11 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 or one for which the secretary of the PCC has given members at least four weeks' notice of the place and time of the meeting and the motion to be considered. Given the importance of the issue such a motion should have been passed either (a) by a majority of those present at a meeting at which at least two-thirds of the members of the PCC who are entitled to attend are present or (b) by a majority of all the members of the PCC.
20. The recommended form of the resolution to be passed by the PCC is as follows:

“This PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.”

A PCC which has passed a resolution should send a copy of it to the diocesan bishop, archdeacon, diocesan registrar and registered patron.
21. Parishes which have passed a resolution may rescind it at any time. The same procedures as are set out in paragraphs 18-19 should apply in relation to a PCC meeting which is to consider a motion rescinding a resolution. Parishes which have passed a resolution should review it from time to time, especially when a vacancy in a benefice arises.
22. The House recognises that the nature of the theological conviction on the ordained ministry of women which underlies a decision to pass such a resolution will vary according to the tradition of the parish concerned. Where a resolution has been

² In the case of a guild church designated and established under section 4 of the City of London (Guild Churches) Act 1952 the responsibility rests with the guild church council and what is said in paragraphs 16 to 29 applies to guild churches and guild church councils as it applies to parishes and PCCs, with the necessary modifications.

passed, and before clergy are appointed to the parish or a bishop chosen by the diocesan bishop to provide oversight, there will, therefore, need to be consultation between bishop and parish to ascertain the nature of that conviction so that the resolution can be implemented effectively. The House will provide guidance for bishops and parishes to help facilitate these conversations.

23. 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.
24. In the event that any difficulties arise between a patron and a parish following the passing of a PCC resolution, the diocesan bishop should do all in his or her power to achieve an outcome that respects the declared view of the parish and protects the parish representatives from having to resort to their own power of veto under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986. The archbishop of the province should also seek to achieve such an outcome in the event of the right of presentation lapsing to him or her under the 1986 Measure.
25. In the case of multi-parish benefices the needs of parishes in the benefice that have not passed a resolution should be weighed alongside those of any parish that has when decisions are taken about appointments to the benefice.
26. The choice of a bishop to undertake ministry in respect of a parish which has passed a resolution is for the relevant diocesan bishop to make, again with a view to avoiding conflict with the theological conviction on this issue underlying its resolution. In all cases the choice should be made from among the male bishops who are members of the House of Bishops of the diocesan synod of that or another diocese of the Church of England.
27. As noted in paragraph 16, parishes which pass a resolution in one part of the country are entitled to expect equivalent treatment to that provided in another. In all cases the diocesan bishop should seek to ensure that pastoral and sacramental ministry is provided in accordance with the guiding principles set out in paragraph 5 above.
28. In addition the diocesan bishop and the bishop invited to minister to the parish should explore how they can best cooperate in a variety of ways to contribute to its welfare, resourcing and mission and in its relationship with the diocese.
29. The precise extent of the ministry entrusted to the bishop is for the diocesan to determine and is likely, for practical reasons to vary according to the pattern of episcopal ministry in that diocese and the extent of the bishop's other commitments. But the expectation is that there will be many similarities with the range of responsibilities carried by any suffragan bishop within a diocese.

4.2 The responsibility for the decision as to whether to pass a Resolution under the Declaration rests neither with the priest alone nor with the congregation as a whole but with the PCC (para. 18).

4.3 If there is no Resolution in force then (subject to the normal rules) any bishop or priest (male or female) may lawfully be appointed to, or administer the sacraments in, the parish. Any informal agreement or assurance that a female priest or bishop will not officiate or be appointed as incumbent or priest-in-charge would be of little value. Breach of such an agreement or assurance could not be the subject of a complaint to the Independent Reviewer. Furthermore, such an agreement or assurance might contravene the Equality Act. Put simply, without a Resolution in place the parish's position will not be secure.

4.4 The majority that is required for the resolution to be passed depends on how many members of the PCC are present:

- If two-thirds of the members of the PCC are present at the meeting, a majority of the members who are present at the meeting must vote in favour.
- If fewer than two-thirds of the members of the PCC are present at the meeting, a majority of all the members of the PCC must vote in favour.

So, for example, if the PCC has 20 members:

- If 14 members attend the meeting, 8 of the 14 must vote in favour.
- If 13 members attend the meeting, 11 of the 13 must vote in favour.

This differs from the position that formerly applied under the 1993 Measure and the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod (see p. 2 above).

! ► 4.5 It should be noted that, because the required majority is a majority either of those present or of the membership of the PCC (rather than a majority of those present and voting) an abstention effectively counts as a vote against.

4.6 A table showing minimum number of votes required (according to the number present at the meeting and the total number of members of the PCC) can be downloaded from this page of the Forward in Faith website: www.forwardinfaith.com/Advice.php

4.7 Once a Resolution has been passed

‘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.’ (para. 23)

If such a conflict arises and the issue is not resolved satisfactorily, complaint can be made to the Independent Reviewer. The advice of the Bishop's Representative and, if necessary, the Forward in Faith office should be sought before this is done.

5. Before the Vote

5.1 The House of Bishops' Guidance Note comments (para. 7):

‘A decision to pass a resolution has significant consequences for the exercise of ministry in the parish. It is good practice, therefore, for the PCC to enable members of the wider church community to submit views before any meeting at which a resolution is to be considered.’

As the Secretary General's introductory note makes clear, the Guidance Note does not have the same status as the Declaration. This is therefore merely a suggestion that the PCC is free to treat as it sees fit.

5.2 The Declaration makes clear that the responsibility for the decision rests with the PCC (para. 18). This is in accordance with the principle whereby in the Church of England decisions about the life of a parish are taken not by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting but by those whom that meeting elects to the PCC.

! ► 5.3 If the PCC decides to invite ‘the wider church community to submit views’, it must still take its own decision. It cannot simply decide to proceed according to the majority opinion among those who choose to vote in a congregational ‘referendum’ or to submit views as part of a consultation process. That is not how the Church of England is governed.

5.4 We recommend that the PCC's discussion should be preceded by opportunities for teaching and discussion, both on the process and on the reasons for passing a Resolution. It would be appropriate to invite the Bishop of The Society or his Representative in the Diocese, and/or a representative of the diocesan branch of Forward in Faith, to participate. If the ‘wider church community’ is to be invited to submit views, such an invitation should follow the opportunity for teaching, discussion and prayer, which should be extended to the congregation as a whole.

! ►

5.5 The Declaration requires that the Secretary of the PCC give the members of the PCC at least four weeks' notice of the place and time of the meeting, and that this notice must include notice of the motion that is to be considered (para. 19). The notice should include the precise terms of the Resolution that is to be considered. Any document that the Resolution would approve should be appended (see paragraphs 7.5-7.6 below). If these requirements are not complied with, the Bishop may ignore the Resolution.

5.6 If the normal legal requirements for PCC meetings are not complied with, the decision may be challenged. In particular:

- 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 at least ten clear days before the meeting.
- If the notice sent four weeks in advance did not include the full Agenda for the meeting, the Secretary should post or deliver the Agenda to every member of the PCC at least seven days before the meeting.

5.7 Different arrangements apply when there is, or is about to be, a vacancy. These are considered in Annex A below.

6. The PCC Meeting

6.1 This section concerns meetings other than those held immediately before or during a vacancy. For arrangements when there is, or is about to be, a vacancy, see Annex A.

6.2 Additional considerations apply in the case of multi-parish benefices and united parishes. For these, see Section 11 below, in addition to this section.

6.3 The normal legal requirements for PCC meetings, set out in the Church Representation Rules, should be followed. A Checklist to help ensure legal requirements are followed is available to download from this page of the Forward in Faith website: www.forwardinfaith.com/Advice.php

6.4 The quorum is one-third of the members of the PCC. However, if fewer than two-thirds are present, a majority of the total number of members of the PCC must vote in favour for the resolution to pass. NB only *members* of the PCC (as defined in Rule 14 of the Church Representation Rules) are entitled to vote. The fact people who are not members of the PCC may have been invited to attend its meetings does not entitle them to vote.

! ► 6.5 The Archdeacon or Rural Dean may suggest that it would be appropriate for him or her to be present at the meeting or even to chair it. Such suggestions should be declined:

- There is no provision in the Church Representation Rules permitting the Archdeacon or Rural Dean to chair a normal meeting of the PCC and it would be illegal for him or her to do so.
- There is no provision in the Church Representation Rules requiring the PCC to permit an Archdeacon or Rural Dean to attend a normal meeting of the PCC. Our view is that it would not be appropriate for him or her to be present, as this might unduly influence the members of the PCC.

6.6 The House of Bishops' Guidance Note comments:

'10. It is important to note that the resolution should be founded on theological conviction in relation to gender and ordained ministry. Considerations such as the personality or theological stance of the diocesan bishop, social conservatism or a desire to distance the parish from the policies of the diocese - for example in relation to pastoral reorganisation, parish share and the deployment of clergy- are not relevant.'

By the same token, considerations that arise from secular thinking about equality or from social liberalism are also not relevant.

! ► 6.7 The House of Bishops' Guidance Note also comments:

11. In considering whether to pass a resolution it is for each PCC member to consider what weight to give to his or her own theological conviction as against the conviction of others in the church community.'

This is a crucial point. Members of the PCC should be reminded that the Resolution is not an opinion poll as to whether they as individuals are in favour of or opposed to the

ordination of women. Rather, they are being asked to consider what ministry will be appropriate for the parish, having regard not only to their own theological convictions but those of other members of the congregation. It is therefore perfectly proper for members of the PCC who are not themselves opposed to the ministry of women as priest and bishops to vote for the Resolution out of concern for others.

- 6.8 If a significant number of members of the congregation (not necessarily a majority) are unable, for theological reasons, to receive the ministry of women as bishops or priests, passing a Resolution will make the parish one in which all can worship with integrity.
- 6.9 Where the parish is the one of the few parishes (or indeed the only parish) in the area, the deanery or even the diocese that is likely to pass a Resolution, this is also a relevant consideration. The Declaration enshrines ‘the Church of England’s wider commitment to sustaining diversity’ (para. 14). The PCC members should ask themselves whether passing the Resolution will contribute to ‘sustaining diversity’ and whether rejecting it would have the effect of diminishing diversity and diminishing the variety of provision that the Church of England offers to the local community.
- 6.10 As detailed in paragraph 4.4 above, the majority required for the resolution to be passed depends on how many members of the PCC are present:
- If two-thirds of the members of the PCC are present at the meeting, a majority of the members who are present at the meeting must vote in favour.
 - If fewer than two-thirds of the members of the PCC are present at the meeting, a majority of all the members of the PCC must vote in favour.
- 6.11 The Church Representation Rules provide that
- If one fifth of the members present and voting on any resolution so require, the minutes shall record the names of members voting for and against that resolution.
 - Any member of the council may require the minutes to record the way that his or her vote was cast on any resolution.
- 6.12 If the Resolution is passed, a copy should be sent to the diocesan bishop, the archdeacon, the diocesan registrar and the registered patron (Declaration, para. 20), and also to the Society Bishop, the Bishop’s Representative and the Forward in Faith office.

7. The Resolution

7.1 Unlike the 1993 Measure, the House of Bishops' Declaration does not require the Resolution to have a specific wording.

7.2 Para. 20 recommends the following form of words:

‘This PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.’

This wording is merely a recommendation, not a requirement. We recommend that the Resolution should include these words, but it may be advisable to amplify them slightly.

7.3 Where there is a significant diversity of views within the congregation and the PCC, and the motivation of some who vote for the Resolution will be their concern for the unity of the parish and not their own theological conviction, it may be appropriate to add some words at the beginning of the resolution that reflect this: *‘For the sake of the unity of our Parish, this PCC requests...’*.

7.4 Once a Resolution has been passed and sent to the diocesan bishop, the next step is ‘consultation between bishop and parish to ascertain the nature of that conviction so that the resolution can be implemented effectively’ (Declaration, para. 22). This consultation will be aided, and greatly simplified, if the PCC has given clear expression to the theological conviction that underlies the Resolution.

7.5 Including a detailed statement of the theological conviction in the Resolution would make it unwieldy, but it will be helpful if the Resolution makes reference to a document which sets out the theological conviction. We therefore recommend the following wording for the Resolution:

“[For the sake of the unity of our Parish,] This PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction set out in the statement appended to this Resolution, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.”

7.6 A draft Statement is offered below. If necessary, it can be amended in order to reflect views expressed in discussions held prior to the PCC's decision. However, if amendments are made, it would be advisable to consult the Bishop's Representative and, if necessary, the Forward in Faith office, to ensure that the effect of the Statement is not altered inadvertently.

[DRAFT TEXT]

Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction under the House of Bishops' Declaration

**by the Parochial Church Council of
The Parish of [NAME OF PARISH]**

We reaffirm our desire to flourish within the life and structures of the Church of England, in accordance with the Five Guiding Principles set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration, and our commitment to Christ's mission in the Diocese of [NAME]. We recognize the diocesan bishop and other bishops of this Diocese as the true and lawful holders of their offices, and wish to maintain the highest degree of communion with them that is consistent with the theological convictions that underlie our Resolution.

The theological convictions set out below are held by a significant number of worshippers in our parish. The Resolution will ensure that the episcopal and priestly ministry exercised in our parish is such that can be received with integrity by all who worship here. Our Resolution contributes to the Church of England's 'wider commitment to sustaining diversity'.

Women have always exercised various ministries in the Church. However, those who are unable to receive the sacramental ministry of women as bishops and priests hold that neither Scripture, nor apostolic Tradition, nor the great majority of the Church throughout the world today endorse the ordination of women as bishops and priests. There is therefore doubt as to whether the roles of bishop or priest are, sacramentally speaking, roles that women can exercise. We ask that episcopal and priestly sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish should be exercised by those whose sacramental ministry is not subject to such doubt.

The unique sacramental ministry of a bishop is to ordain bishops, priests and deacons. In receiving their ministry, we receive the ministry of the bishops who ordained them. If there is doubt about the sacramental ministry of women as bishops, there will be doubt about the sacramental ministry of those whom they ordain. **We therefore ask that episcopal and priestly sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish be exercised**

- ❖ **by male bishops at whose consecration a male bishop presided and who stand in the historic, apostolic succession of bishops so ordained, and**
- ❖ **by male priests ordained by such bishops.**

We are pledged to maintain the highest possible degree of communion with the Bishop of [NAME OF DIOCESAN SEE] and the other bishops of this Diocese, and we reject any suggestion that ordaining women to the episcopate and priesthood renders a bishop's episcopal ministry invalid. However, our flourishing requires the flourishing of our priest. We understand that our priest can only flourish if he is in *full* communion with a bishop and with all those whom that bishop ordains to the priesthood – a full communion made visible when he stands together with them at the altar. Therefore **we request that episcopal sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish be entrusted to a bishop who ordains only men to the priesthood.**

Approved by the PCC on [DATE]

The following alternative final paragraph may be preferred where a PCC passes the Resolution but the parish priest is not in favour of it, or during a vacancy:

We are pledged to maintain the highest possible degree of communion with the Bishop of **[NAME OF DIOCESAN SEE]** and the other bishops of this Diocese, and we reject any suggestion that ordaining women to the episcopate and priesthood renders a bishop's episcopal ministry invalid. However, we can only flourish if we are in full communion with a bishop and with all those whom that bishop ordains to the priesthood – a full communion made visible when he stands together with them at the altar. Therefore we request that episcopal sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish be entrusted to a bishop who ordains only men to the priesthood.

7A. After the Vote: What Next?

7A.1 If the Resolution is passed, a copy should be sent to:

- **the diocesan bishop,**
- **the archdeacon,**
- **the diocesan registrar, and**
- **the registered patron** (Declaration, para. 20).

Please also send it to

- **the Society Bishop,**
- **the Bishop's Representative, and**
- **the Forward in Faith office.**

7A.2 Forward in Faith encourages you to include the following points in the accompanying letter:

1. **Name of the parish;**
2. **Date of PCC meeting;**
3. **Total number of members of the PCC;**
4. **Number of PCC members present at the meeting;**
5. **How many members voted in favour of the Resolution, how many voted against and how many abstained;**
6. **The precise wording of the Resolution;**
7. Assurance that:
 - i. **The PCC had been given full opportunity to discuss the underlying theological conviction** *[state when]*;
 - ii. **At least 4 weeks' notice was given to PCC members of the time and place of the meeting;**
 - iii. This notice included:
 - a. **notice of the motion to vote on the Resolution;**
 - b. **the precise terms of the Resolution;**
 - c. **the 'Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction under the House of Bishops' Declaration'** *[and/or any other such document expressing theological conviction]*;
 - iv. **A full agenda was included either with that notice or at least 7 days before the meeting;**
 - v. **At least 10 days before the meeting a notice giving time and place of the meeting was:**
 - a. **Signed by or on behalf of the Chairman of the PCC;**
 - b. **Posted on or near the principal door of every church/building licensed for worship in the parish.**
8. Forward in Faith encourages you to express in the letter the parish's continued commitment to engaging in the life of the diocese.
9. Some diocesan bishops ask about the extent of any consultation within the congregation. Such consultation is not required. However, members of the

congregation were given any opportunity to express their views, or there was any opportunity for discussion or teaching offered, it may be helpful to mention this.

7A.3 Ensure that the ‘Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction’ [and/or any other relevant document] is sent with the letter.

7A.4 Affiliating the Parish to The Society

7A.4.1 When a PCC has passed a Resolution, please do not forget to consider and apply for parish affiliation to The Society, if you have not done so already. The Society, under the patronage of St Wilfrid and St Hilda, links together the parishes that are under the oversight of the members of the Council of bishops.

7A.4.2 For details of how to affiliate the parish to The Society, see www.sswsh.com/Parish-Affiliation.php or go to www.sswsh.com then click ‘ABOUT US’ then click on ‘Parish Affiliation’.

7A.4.3 Affiliated parishes are also invited to register (or continue to be registered) with Forward in Faith, at no extra charge. This enables the parish to send representatives to the Forward in Faith National Assembly and also entitles it to a discount on advertising in Forward in Faith publications.

7A.4.4 It is also hoped that members of the congregation will be encouraged to become members of Forward in Faith. (Forward in Faith is the membership organization which supports and finances the work of The Society. See www.forwardinfaith.com/JoinUs.php

8. Conversations with the Diocesan Bishop

8.1 Again, for vacancies, see Annex A, and for multi-parish benefices and united parishes see also Section 11 below.

8.2 The reason stated in para. 22 of the Declaration for requiring ‘consultation between bishop and parish’ after a Resolution has been passed is

‘that the nature of the theological conviction on the ordained ministry of women which underlies a decision to pass such a resolution will vary according to the tradition of the parish concerned’

and

‘there will, therefore, need to be consultation between bishop and parish to ascertain the nature of that conviction so that the resolution can be implemented effectively.’

8.3 This consultation may or may not take the form of a meeting.

! ► 8.4 The purpose of such consultation is not for the diocesan bishop to attempt to persuade the PCC to modify its theological conviction. Any attempt to do so should be reported to the Society Bishop’s Representative.

8.5 The House of Bishops’ Guidance Note (GS Misc 1077, para. 13) says:

‘It is for the PCC to nominate one or more of its members to articulate on its behalf to the bishop the particular needs of the parish in the light of the theological conviction that underlies the resolution, so that the resolution can be implemented effectively.’

8.6 The consultation will be made much simpler if the PCC has itself ‘articulated the particular needs of the parish in the light of the theological conviction that underlies the resolution’ by referring in the Resolution to a statement that the PCC has approved (such as the draft "Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction" appended to paragraph 7.6 above). This will relieve individuals of the burden of having to articulate what they believe those needs and that conviction to be, and avoid the possibility of the diocesan bishop believing himself to have heard different needs or convictions articulated (which could give rise to unseemly arguments within the parish and between the parish and the diocesan bishop).

8.7 We recommend that (except where the parish is, or is about to become, vacant, or the parish priest is not himself in sympathy with the Resolution passed by the PCC) the PCC should always nominate the parish priest to represent it in these conversations. If the parish priest is nominated, it is for the PCC to decide whether he should be accompanied by a lay member of the PCC, and if so, which.

9. The Choice of a Bishop and Priests

9.1 The Declaration states:

‘The choice of a bishop to undertake ministry in respect of a parish which has passed a resolution is for the relevant diocesan bishop to make, again with a view to avoiding conflict with the theological conviction on this issue underlying its resolution. In all cases the choice should be made from among the male bishops who are members of the House of Bishops of the diocesan synod of that or another diocese of the Church of England’. (para. 26)

9.2 As para. 15 of the Guidance Note explains, the last sentence of para. 26 of the Declaration means that the bishop must be chosen from among the serving bishops and cannot be a retired bishop. (This does not prevent retired bishops from assisting the bishop who has been chosen, for example, by confirming, but this should always be at the request of, or with the agreement of, the bishop who is providing episcopal ministry to the parish under the Declaration.)

9.3 The parish’s right under the Declaration is to receive episcopal ministry that accords with the theological convictions that underlie the Declaration. The parish does *not* have a right to choose between bishops whose ministry would accord with that theological conviction. That decision is for the diocesan bishop to take (but will of course require the consent of the bishop whom he wishes to appoint).

10. Reviewing, Revising and Rescinding

10.1 Paragraph 21 of the Declaration says:

‘Parishes which have passed a resolution may rescind it at any time. The same procedures as are set out in paragraphs 18-19 should apply in relation to a PCC meeting which is to consider a motion rescinding a resolution. Parishes which have passed a resolution should review it from time to time, especially when a vacancy in a benefice arises.

10.2 It is a good idea to review from time to time how the arrangements for sacramental and pastoral ministry under the House of Bishops’ Declaration are working. This will also remind members of the PCC of the reasons why the Resolution needed to be passed.

10.3 The requirement to review the Resolution from time to time does not mean that the PCC has to vote again on the Resolution, or that when the Resolution is reviewed the procedures mentioned in the Declaration need to be followed. All that is needed is for a PCC agenda to include as an agenda item ‘To review the Resolution under the House of Bishops’ Declaration’. If the PCC is content with the working of the Resolution, the Minutes of the PCC should simply record that a discussion took place and include a distillation of the view arrived at.

10.4 If any further action is required, this may be with a view to rescinding the Resolution, but it may also be that the PCC wishes to strengthen the theological conviction set out in its statement and the needs that are stated as flowing from it.

10.5 If there is to be a fresh vote on an existing Resolution, whether with a view to rescinding it or strengthening it, the procedures laid down in the Declaration and described in this document need to be followed.

11. Multi-Parish Benefices and United Parishes

- 11.1 Para. 25 of the House of Bishops' Declaration says:
- 'In the case of multi-parish benefices the needs of parishes in the benefice that have not passed a resolution should be weighed alongside those of any parish that has when decisions are taken about appointments to the benefice.'
- 11.2 Note that what is said here refers to 'appointments to the benefice', not the way in which ministry is exercised in individual parishes within the benefice. Assistant and visiting clergy should only minister in an individual parish if their ministry will not conflict with a Resolution passed by the PCC of that parish. The licence of a Team Vicar or Assistant Curate whose ministry would conflict with a resolution passed by one parish in a multi-parish benefice should be limited so as not to authorize ministry that would conflict with the resolution.
- 11.3 With regard to the appointment of an incumbent or priest-in-charge, what is contemplated here is that the needs of parishes that pass a Resolution and the needs of parishes that do not pass a Resolution are weighed. With regard to ministry within a parish that has passed a Resolution, the Resolution will stand and those responsible are charged with finding a way of giving effect to it.
- 11.4 The House of Bishops' Guidance Note elaborates on the distinction between 'appointments to the benefice' and ministry in a Resolution parish:
- '19. Paragraph 25 of the Declaration acknowledges that, when it comes to decisions about the appointment of clergy to multi-parish benefices, the needs of parishes that have not passed a resolution should be weighed alongside those of any parish that has.
20. Given the diversity of situations in multi-parish benefices it is not possible, nationally, to give guidance that will cover all situations. The aim should be to explore options that will avoid, on the one hand, a single parish being able to frustrate the wishes of the others in the benefice and, on the other, that parish being denied the pastoral and sacramental provision that the PCC has sought.
21. Where a resolution is passed by a parish in a multi-parish benefice, the diocesan bishop will consult with representatives of the other parishes in the benefice in relation to the practical arrangements that need to be made to give effect to the resolution.'
- 11.4 Thus, the House of Bishops contemplates a situation where the incumbent or priest-in-charge of a multi-parish benefice will not exercise priestly ministry within a parish in that benefice (just as the diocesan bishop may be unable to exercise episcopal ministry within that parish).

United Parishes

- 11.5 The Declaration makes no provision for a District Church Council within a United Parish to vote on Resolutions, but there is nothing to prevent a DCC from passing a Resolution in order to make clear to the diocesan bishop the views held at the church

in question. Where the PCC does not pass a Resolution, we advise a DCC to do so and send it to the Bishop, the archdeacon and the incumbent, asking them to identify a solution that will allow the congregation to flourish (Principles 4&5) and will fulfil 'the Church of England's wider commitment to sustaining diversity' (Declaration, para. 14). Such a Resolution should also be sent to the Society Bishop, the Bishop's Representative and the Forward in Faith office.

ANNEXES

- A Vacancies
- B Commentary on the Five Guiding Principles

ANNEX A

Vacancies

1 Before the Vacancy

- 1.1 We strongly urge that the parish priest of any parish of The Society, any parish served by priests of The Society and any parish whose PCC has passed a Resolution under the Declaration inform the Society Bishop of a forthcoming vacancy at the earliest opportunity (and in confidence if necessary), so that the Bishop and the Bishop's Representative can offer support to the parish as required. He should ensure that the Churchwardens and the Vice-Chairman of the PCC have copies of this booklet and draw attention to this section of the booklet in particular.
- 1.2 The parish priest should make his Churchwardens and PCC aware of
- the proper process that should be followed by the Diocese,
 - the need to resist any pressure that may be put upon them to make hasty decisions, in particular about the Resolution, and
 - the action to be taken should any representative of the Diocese attempt to persuade them to rescind or amend the Resolution or suggest that it would be to their advantage to do so (see para. 2.5 below).
- 1.3 If the diocesan authorities contact the churchwardens for a preliminary meeting before the parish priest has left the parish, such a meeting should only take place with the agreement of the parish priest. The Society Bishop and his Representative should be informed so that they can offer support. The Churchwardens may wish to invite the Bishop's Representative to attend the meeting to take notes. Any such meetings are simply fact-finding meetings: no decisions can or should be taken at them.

2 The Resolution

- 2.1 Para. 21 of the House of Bishops' Declaration states:
 'Parishes which have passed a resolution should review it from time to time, especially when a vacancy in a parish arises.'
- 2.2 If it is known that a vacancy is about to arise, there is nothing to prevent such a review occurring before the parish priest leaves. It would then not be necessary for the review to be repeated during the vacancy.
- ! ► 2.3 The processes for passing a Resolution laid down in the Declaration should *not* be followed in the case of a review. All that is needed is for the Agenda of a normal PCC meeting (called and held in accordance with the Church Representation Rules) to include as an agenda item 'To review the Resolution under the House of Bishops' Declaration'. If the PCC is content with the working of the Resolution, the Minutes of the PCC should simply record that a discussion took place and include a distillation of the view arrived at.
- 2.4 If, however, there is to be a fresh vote on an existing Resolution, whether with a view to rescinding it or strengthening it, the procedures laid down in the Declaration and

described in sections 5-7 of this document will need to be followed. Note that para. 19 of the Declaration says that the requirement of four weeks' notice does not apply if a Resolution is to be voted upon at a PCC meeting held under section 11 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 (*for which, see Section 4 of this Annex*).

- ! ► 2.5 If, at any point in the process, attempts are made to persuade the Churchwardens, the lay representatives or the PCC that the PCC should rescind or amend the Resolution, or it is suggested that this would be to the parish's advantage, this would be contrary to the House of Bishops' Declaration. Such statements
- are not directed towards sustaining 'the welfare of the whole Church of England... in all its theological breadth and depth' (para. 4) or enabling those who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests 'to flourish' (para. 5, principle 4);
 - do not display 'sensitivity to the feelings of vulnerability that some will have that their position within the Church of England will gradually be eroded' (para. 10);
 - may conflict with the requirement that 'equal treatment, for example in relation to resource issues... is essential irrespective of convictions in relation to gender and ministry' (para. 15); and
 - do not contribute to the establishment of a 'climate of trust within which there can be mutual flourishing' (para. 38).

- 2.6 If such statements are made, the person making them should, in fairness, be given an opportunity to withdraw them and apologise. If this does not occur, the meeting should immediately be adjourned and the Society Bishop, the Bishop's Representative (if not present) and the Forward in Faith office should be informed. If the statements are not withdrawn, it may be necessary for the PCC to submit a grievance to the Independent Reviewer.

3 The Vacancy Process

- 3.1 The process for the choosing a new incumbent (rector or vicar) is laid down in the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/1986/3/contents).

[Under s. 35, some of the provisions do not apply to benefices in the patronage of the Crown (including benefices to which appointment is made by the Lord Chancellor, and Duchy of Lancaster and Duchy of Cornwall benefices), though in practice the process followed is similar in many respects.]

[See Schedule 2 of the Measure for multi-parish benefices, benefices held in plurality, benefices with a team council or a joint PCC, and benefices where the PCC is the patron.]

- 3.2 Where a benefice is vacant or is shortly to become vacant, the Bishop may suspend presentation to the benefice. The rules for this are contained in section 85 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2011/3). It is important to check that the rules have been complied with. If the right of presentation is suspended, an incumbent (rector or vicar) cannot be appointed and instead the

bishop may appoint a priest-in-charge. If presentation is suspended, the Bishop may follow a process similar to that for appointing an incumbent when he or she appoints a priest-in-charge, but the legal rights conferred by the Patronage (Benefices) Measure do not apply.

- 3.3 Where a benefice is held in plurality (i.e. it has the same incumbent as one or more other benefices), any of the PCCs may terminate the arrangement by simply passing a resolution under s. 32 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2011/3/contents) within 28 days of the vacancy notice being served. (This may not be a good idea, as the single-parish benefice might not attract a full stipend, and the Bishop might suspend presentation to the benefice in response to the decision, but it is important to note that this power exists.)

4 The Section 11 Meeting(s) of the PCC

- 4.1 Under Section 11 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure, one or more meetings of the PCC must be held within four weeks of the vacancy notice being served, for the following purposes:

- (a) preparing (or approving) a ‘parish profile’ describing the conditions, needs and traditions of the parish;
- (b) appointing two lay members of the PCC to act as representatives of the council in connection with the selection of an incumbent

[The representatives need not necessarily be the churchwardens. The following may not be chosen: the spouse or civil partner of the outgoing incumbent, the patron or the patron’s representative, a deaconess or layworker licensed to the parish].

[In a multi-parish benefice, smaller parishes may only have one representative.]

- (c) deciding whether to request the registered patron to consider advertising the vacancy;

[The Society Bishop will be able to advise on whether this is appropriate in any particular case. If there is to be an advertisement, it would be a good idea to include *New Directions* among the vehicles used.]

- (d) deciding whether to request a meeting under section 12 of the Measure (see section 5 of this Annex below).

- (e) deciding whether to request a statement in writing from the diocesan bishop describing in relation to the benefice the needs of the diocese and the wider interests of the Church.

! ► NB Though the House of Bishops’ Declaration says that a resolution should be reviewed when a vacancy arises (see para. 2.1 of this Annex), there is no requirement to review a resolution, let alone to vote upon it again, at a Section 11 meeting.

- 4.2 The rules for this meeting are laid down in Section 11 of the Measure and in the Church Representation Rules.

- ! ► 4.3 The following may not be present at a Section 11 meeting: the outgoing incumbent, his spouse or civil partner, the patron or the patron's representative. If the diocesan bishop is the patron, it may be assumed that an Archdeacon or Rural (or Area) Dean is his representative and it would therefore be illegal for him or her to attend the Section 11 meeting. Where the diocesan bishop is not the patron, it is for the PCC to decide whether to permit the Archdeacon or Rural/Area Dean (or other non-members such as the Lay Chairman of the Deanery Synod) to attend the meeting. Our view is that it would not be appropriate for any of these to be present, as they might unduly influence the members of the PCC in the exercise of their responsibilities under s. 11 of the Measure. However, if they are to be permitted to attend, the Society Bishop's Representative should also be invited to be present and should take notes.
- ! ► 4.4 It may be suggested that the Archdeacon, Rural Dean or Deanery Synod Lay Chairman should chair the meeting. However, there is no provision in the Church Representation Rules permitting someone who is not a member of the PCC to chair a normal meeting of the PCC, and it would be illegal for them, as non-members, to do so. The meeting should be chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the PCC or by another member of the PCC specifically appointed by the meeting.
- 4.5 If the normal legal requirements for PCC meetings are not complied with, a decision to pass, amend or rescind a Resolution at this meeting may be challenged:
- 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 at least ten clear days before the meeting.
 - If the notice sent four weeks in advance did not include the full Agenda for the meeting, the Secretary should post or deliver the Agenda to every member of the PCC at least seven days before the meeting.
 - No business which is not specified in the agenda shall be transacted at the meeting except by consent of three-quarters of the members present at the meeting.

5 Section 12 Meetings

- 5.1 A Section 12 Meeting is a meeting requested by the patron, the diocesan bishop or the PCC and held within six weeks of the request being made. The bishop and the patron may each attend in person or send a representative. The Rural Dean (unless he is the outgoing incumbent) and the Lay Chairman of the Deanery Synod must be invited. We recommend that the Society Bishop should also be invited to attend or send his Bishop's Representative, and that the Bishop's Representative should take notes.
- 5.2 A meeting only counts as a Section 12 Meeting if it the diocesan bishop or his/her representative, the patron or the patron's representative and one-third of the PCC members entitled to attend are present.
- 5.3 Those present at the meeting decide who should chair it. NB This need not be the diocesan bishop or his representative.

- ! ► 5.4 The purpose of a Section 12 Meeting is ‘enabling those present at the meeting to exchange views’ on the parish profile and the needs of the diocese: it is not a meeting at which decisions can be taken.

6 The Choice of an Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge

- 6.1 The lay representatives of a parish that has passed a Resolution under the Declaration should ask whether candidates are priests of The Society and, if not, why they were unable or unwilling to make the Declaration required to become a priest of The Society.
- 6.2 Under para. 23 of the Declaration, ‘anyone involved in making appointments... 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’. Thus, a diocesan bishop cannot appoint a priest as incumbent or priest-in-charge whose appointment would conflict with the conviction underlying the Resolution. If this requirement is not honoured, the matter should be reported immediately to the Society Bishop, the Bishop’s Representative and the Forward in Faith office so that they can assist the parish in resolving it or (should a satisfactory resolution not emerge) advise on referring the case to the Independent Reviewer.

- 6.3 Para. 24 of the Declaration states:

‘In the event that any difficulties arise between a patron and a parish following the passing of a PCC resolution, the diocesan bishop should do all in his or her power to achieve an outcome that respects the declared view of the parish and protects the parish representatives from having to resort to their own power of veto under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986. The archbishop of the province should also seek to achieve such an outcome in the event of the right of presentation lapsing to him or her under the 1986 Measure.’

The powers of the diocesan bishop include a power to veto. This paragraph means that if the patron presents a candidate whose appointment would conflict with the conviction underlying the Resolution, the diocesan bishop must use his or her power of veto in order to protect the lay representatives from having to use their own power of veto. Any legal action would then be taken against the diocesan bishop rather than the lay representatives. Failure to comply with this requirement should be reported immediately to the Society Bishop, the Bishop’s Representative and the Forward in Faith office

- 6.4 Whatever process has been adopted for arriving at the choice of a new incumbent, and however much the lay representatives were involved in that process, at the end of it they each retain the right to veto the chosen candidate. So, if there has been an interview panel on which (for example) the bishop, archdeacon, area dean and others have sat together with the lay representatives, it is not a case of simply counting votes to arrive at the preferred candidate. All the parish representatives (individually) must be happy with the choice. This is especially significant in a multi-parish benefice that does not have a joint PCC.

Commentary on the Five Guiding Principles¹

[1] Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;

- 1 **Principle 1** states what the Church of England corporately holds, not what individual members of it may or may not believe: it remains perfectly legitimate to hold a different view. However, if someone whom we cannot recognize, sacramentally speaking, as a bishop or priest holds an office such as diocesan bishop, suffragan bishop, archdeacon, rector or vicar, that office is not vacant, so it is possible in good conscience to recognize the holder of that office as holding the legal responsibilities that belong to it.
- 2 However, this recognition does not require us to recognize him or her as a bishop or priest in the sacramental sense, or to receive his or her sacramental ministry. Canonical obedience to the holder of an office does not imply anything about the sacramental status of the office-holder. Priests and deacons owe canonical obedience to the holder of the *office* of diocesan bishop, whether or not that person has been ordained to the *order* of bishop. (Ordination as a bishop sometimes happens days or even weeks after someone becomes a diocesan bishop. In the meantime, they have jurisdiction and are owed canonical obedience, even though they have not been ordained to the episcopate.)
- 3 It is very important that all office holders in the Church of England are treated with due respect and courtesy. Parishes, clergy and people cannot expect to be treated with respect and courtesy if they do not themselves show respect and courtesy.

[2] Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;

- 4 **Principle 2** requires anyone who ministers in the Church of England to acknowledge that the Church of England ‘has reached a clear decision on the matter’. That is plainly the case. A clear decision may not necessarily stand for all time, however. We may still hope and pray that in the fullness of time the Church of England will come to recognize this decision to have been wrong. Principle 2 needs to be read in the light of Principle 3.

¹ A fuller commentary is available on the Forward in Faith website at www.forwardinfaith.com/resources/Women%20Bishops/Commentary.html

[3] Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;

- 5 **Principle 3** says that the ‘process of reception’ (which the Act of Synod called a process of ‘discernment in the wider Church’, and which the Declaration calls ‘a process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God’) continues. The term ‘reception’ refers to the idea that a doctrine enunciated by a council or synod may in the end come to be ‘received’ by the whole Church or to be rejected by the whole Church. The Church of England’s decision regarding women’s ordination is clear, but it cannot be regarded as absolute because, as the Preface to the Declaration of Assent says, the Church of England is only ‘part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church’. Orders belong to the whole Church, and it is the whole Church that must ultimately decide on changes to them. Only the whole Church knows the whole truth.

[4] Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures;

- 6 **Principle 4** recognizes our position as one of ‘theological conviction’, and one that continues to be within the spectrum of Anglican teaching and tradition. This principle complies with Resolution III.2 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, which called on the Communion’s churches ‘to affirm that those who dissent from, as well as those who assent to, the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate are both loyal Anglicans’.
- 7 Because ours is a legitimate theological conviction – in fact, the classical Anglican position – the Church of England is committed to enabling us ‘to flourish within its life and structures’. The bishops and others in authority will need to be able to demonstrate (if necessary to the Independent Reviewer) that what they do in respect of us is directed towards enabling us not merely to exist but to *flourish*.

[5] Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.

- 8 **Principle 5** says that the provision made for the minority will be ‘pastoral and sacramental’. Thus, the ministry exercised by bishops who provide episcopal ministry to Resolution parishes will not only be the sacramental ministry of presiding at the Eucharist, Christian Initiation and Ordination, but will also embrace responsibility for the wider life of the church and parish.
- 9 The provision is made ‘without specifying a limit of time’. Only the House of Bishops can amend or rescind the Declaration, and it can only do so if a two-thirds majority in each House of the General Synod approves.
- 10 Principle 5 also speaks of a ‘degree of communion’. Christians of different traditions who are separated with regard to the Eucharist, the episcopate and ordained ministry are nonetheless said to share a high *degree* of communion by virtue of their common baptism and faith. Such language has been especially prominent in the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue because of teaching formalized at the Second Vatican Council.² During Archbishop Robert Runcie’s visit to Rome in 1989 he and Pope St John Paul II spoke in their Common Declaration of ‘that certain yet imperfect communion we already share’. In 2006 Pope Benedict and Archbishop Rowan Williams spoke of ‘the real but incomplete communion we share’.
- 11 In 2001 the House of Bishops, responding to *One Bread, One Body* (a teaching document of the English and Welsh Roman Catholic bishops), noted that ‘there are degrees to which communion is realized or expressed’ and commented that ‘The Second Vatican Council’s teaching about “a real, though imperfect communion” finds an echo in Anglican ecumenical theology’.³
- 12 This helps us to understand the sense in which we are in communion with those who ordain women as bishops and priests, the women so ordained, and those bishops and priests whom they will ordain, despite our differences of conviction.
- 13 By calling on us to live in ‘the highest possible degree of communion’, Principle 5 implicitly recognizes that *full* communion will not be possible, and that our communion will be impaired (because the Church of England no longer has an episcopate or a priesthood that enjoys full mutual recognition).

² This accords with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that there are degrees of communion: ‘Those who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect’ (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3).

³ *The Eucharist: Sacrament of Unity. An Occasional Paper of the House of Bishops of the Church of England* (GS Misc 632) (London: Church House Publishing, 2001), p. 7: para. 13.

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