

Changing Governance Option 4 – Unification of all or some of the parishes in the benefice

A single parish with a single PCC can be created by uniting all the parishes within the benefice by means of a Pastoral Scheme. Also, whilst a multi-parish benefice might not wish to combine all its parishes into a single parish, it is possible to unite two or more of the parishes in order to reduce the total number of parishes (and therefore PCCs) within the benefice.

It is important that before any formal consultation is started under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 as outlined below, that full, frank and detailed discussions have taken place in all the PCCS and congregations so that everyone understands what is proposed.

The Pastoral Scheme could make provision for due representation from each parish church on the PCC (by a Bishop's Instrument (Appendix 2)). The existing Parish Churches could all remain Parish Churches, or some could become Chapels of Ease. The number of Churchwardens for the new parish(es) could be reduced.

Process: This is done under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011: (See Appendix 1)

- The PCCs resolve to ask the Area Mission and Pastoral Committee to consider a proposal for the unification of all or some of the parishes in the benefice
- Proposal prepared by Mission and Pastoral Secretary
- The PCC proposal is considered by the Area Mission and Pastoral Committee
- A formal consultation is held with a number of interested parties (Archdeacon, clergy, PCCs, Area Dean, Lay Chair and the patron(s)) and their views considered by the Committee
- If everyone is supportive, the proposals are sent to the Bishop for approval
- A draft Pastoral Scheme is then prepared and 'validated' by the Church Commissioners
- The draft Pastoral Scheme is subject to a public notice period, during which anyone may make representations for or against the Scheme
- If no adverse representations are received, the Scheme takes effect

Advantages:

- Single, or reduced number of PCCs for whole area of the benefice, streamlining governance and significantly reducing the number of meetings
- Co-ordinated approach to mission and ministry for whole benefice/parish. The single PCC can establish committees (both permanent and temporary) of both PCC and non PCC members to co-ordinate various branches of church work (Appendix 3)
- Possible solution where a number of parishes with small congregations are struggling to fill parish offices, such as Churchwarden, PCC Secretary or Treasurer

Disadvantages:

- May be too radical an approach, particularly if parishes are not used to working together
- Requires a formal legal process leading to a Pastoral Scheme; can only be 'undone' by another Pastoral Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions

1/ What will happen to the value of the Parish Share request?

The Parish Share request will be re-calculated based on the new parish. Due to the safeguards in place, the request cannot increase by more than 10% of the total requested from the old parishes.

2/ What will happen to historic Parish Share arrears of all/some of the existing parishes?

In order that the new parish does not start life with historic debts, all historic Parish share arrears will be written off.

3/ What happens to restricted and designated funds?

All current restricted and designated funds will continue to be restricted and designated in the new parish.

4/ What happens with the bank accounts?

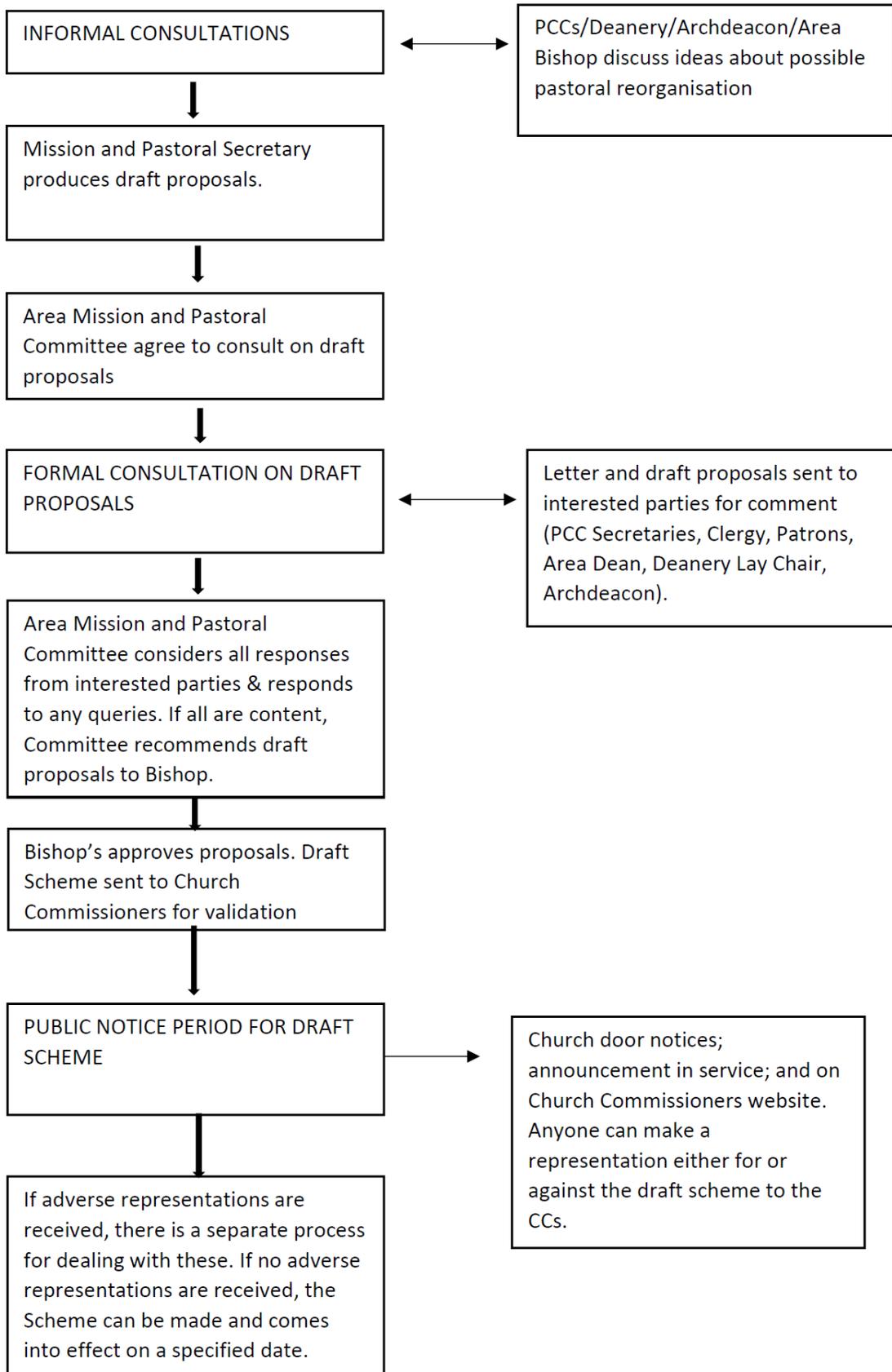
All current bank accounts will need to be closed and a new account established for the new parish. All bank balances will need to be transferred to the new account.

5/ What happens about Charity Commission registration?

If the old PCC was registered with the Charity Commission, then they will need to apply to be removed from the register (Appendix 4). If the new PCC has an income of over £100K it will need to apply to register with the Charity Commission in the usual way.

How the finances of the new parish are to be dealt with can be outlined in an Explanatory Appendix to the Bishop's Instrument drawn up to make provision for due representation from each parish church on the PCC (Appendix 2).

Appendix 1 – Flow Chart of Pastoral Re-organisation



Appendix 2 – Bishop’s Instrument

WHEREAS

1. A Pastoral Scheme was made by the Church Commissioners on the XXX day of XXX (hereafter “The Scheme”)
2. The Scheme formed the united Parish of XXX with XXX parish churches (Saint XXX and Saint XXX)
3. The Scheme came into operation on the XXX being the first day of the month following the day of it being made by the Church Commissioners
4. This Instrument is made by Us pursuant to paragraph X of the Scheme under which We may by Instrument under Our hand make provision for ensuring that the congregation of every church or place of worship in the new parish will have its own elected representatives of the laity on the parochial church council of the new parish.

NOW WE NICHOLAS by Divine Permission LORD BISHOP OF LEEDS (hereafter “the Bishop”) hereby make this **Instrument**:

Electoral Roll

1. There shall be one electoral roll for the parish
2. A person whose name is on such an electoral roll shall be entitled to the benefits of membership including participation in any election at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.
3. In addition, any person applying to be added to the roll shall be invited to indicate an association with one of the XXX parish churches or the XXX licenced place of worship in the Parish.

Parochial Church Council

1. There is one Parochial Church Council (“the PCC”) for the whole Parish.
2. The PCC is established in accordance with the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended by the Synodical Governance Measure 1969.

The PCC shall comprise :-

- (i) The Incumbent
- (ii) Any other Clerk in Holy Orders, Deaconess or Lay Worker licensed to the Parish

- (iii) Any Readers who are licensed to the Parish or licensed to an area which includes the Parish and whose names are on the roll of the Parish
 - (iv) The Churchwardens
 - (v) All persons whose names are on the roll of the Parish and who are lay members of the XXX Deanery Synod, the Leeds Diocesan Synod or the General Synod
 - (vi) Representatives of the laity elected from the XXX parish churches to the PCC annually which shall be XXX from each church, or as provided in a subsequent resolution of the general meeting of the Parish, the latter to have effect for elections held from the following annual general meeting.
 - (vii) If the PCC so decides not exceeding 2 members may be co-opted to serve until the conclusion of the next Annual Parochial Church Meeting
3. The conduct of business and elections thereto shall be in accordance with the Church Representation Rules 2020 ("The Rules") and by such other provisions as to function as have been, or may be in the future, enacted.

Miscellaneous

3. This Instrument is made under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 and will cease to have effect no later than day of 202X.

We have hereunto set Our hand this day of Two Thousand and XXX

Examples of Explanatory Appendices

1. Financial Arrangements

1. The PCC is responsible for all parish finance, its management and control, including the appointment of a PCC treasurer. While it may delegate some of its duties this does not remove its legal responsibilities. These include:
- (i) Preparing the Annual Report and accounts (financial statements), which must be presented to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the requirements of the Church Representation Rules. Any accounts from individual churches must be aggregated into the annual PCC accounts.
 - (ii) Keeping 'proper accounting records', which include the annual financial statements, and which must be preserved for at least six years from the end of the financial year to which they relate.

- (iii) Ensuring that the finances of the PCC are under its control and decision making is only delegated if the PCC can ensure that its wishes will be followed.
- (iv) Arranging for a suitable independent examination or audit of the financial statements.

2. The PCC account will gather its income from service collections, regular planned giving and income from events designed to supplement it. These funds will be used to cover day to day running expenses of the parish (e.g. insurance, energy bills, parish share, vicar's expenses, service consumables, printing, etc.)

3. A separate account will be established for each church. Existing fabric funds and other restricted funds for each of the five churches will be transferred to these accounts. Future income for these accounts will come from designated fundraising activities, individual contributions to specific buildings and possible transfer from the PCC general fund as/when there is need or budgeted. These accounts will be used to cover capital expenses for maintenance and development of the fabric of each church.

2. Churchwardens

- 1. So far as possible one churchwarden to be elected to represent the congregations from each of the XXX churches.
- 2. However, the XXX churchwardens will share responsibility for the whole parish,
 - (i) Churchwardens should have different and complementary skills (e.g. interest in hospitality, pastoral care, buildings, fundraising, worship etc.)

3. PCC Committees

- 1. The PCC may establish committees or focus groups (Church Representation Rule M32) and there shall be clear terms of reference for all such bodies. All committees or focus groups will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are staying within their terms of reference, reporting appropriately to the PCC, and to consider if they are still necessary. These reviews shall be done at regular intervals and all committees or focus groups will be reviewed at the first PCC meeting after the APCM with the continuation of each committee or focus group being approved or otherwise.
- 2. The incumbent of the parish will be a member of all committees or focus groups, ex-officio (by right of office), and will assume the chair unless they consider it appropriate for the PCC to appoint someone else.
- 3. All committees or focus groups are open to all church members.

Appendix 3 – Examples of PCC Committees

Committee	Membership	Responsibilities
Buildings/fabric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One member from each church (possibly a churchwarden) • Up to four other members who have experience/expertise in this type of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quinquennial inspections and implementation of identified works • General maintenance schedule • Health and Safety • Churchyards • Preparing faculty applications • Church Halls (or a separate committee just for this if needed)
Children, youth and schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday school leaders • Youth group leaders • Schools liaison leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday school/youth group curriculum • Development of staff
Mission and outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One member from each church • Home groups co-ordinator • Up to four other members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To teach, baptise and nurture believers • Develop home groups • To seek to transform the unjust structures of society • To reach out to those on the edge
Social and Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One member from each church • Up to four other members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To co-ordinate social activities • To co-ordinate fundraising activities • To encourage members of communities to engage with social and fundraising activities
Music and worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organists • Church music group leaders • Lay Readers • Lay worship leaders • Prayer team leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish worship rota • Additional festival provisions • Developing worship styles

<p>Treasury</p> <p>(legal aspects of this committee must be checked with the Diocesan Finance Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCC Treasurer • Church finance officers • Gift Aid officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee parish accounts • Oversee restricted funds • Oversee Gift Aid • Annual budgeting
<p>Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magazine editor • Web-site editor • Social media editor • One member from each church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To produce benefice/parish magazines • To oversee web-site content • To oversee social media content
<p>Pastoral support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral visitors • Prayer team leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate pastoral visiting • Respond to individual needs • Support clergy

Appendix 4 – Template Email to Apply to the charity Commission to be Removed from the Register of Charities

Email subject line – Re Parochial Church Council for the Ecclesiastical Parish of XXX; Request for removal from the Register of Charities

(Include the following paragraph if the new PCC has been registered with the Charity Commission.)

I am writing to inform the Commission that, following the registration of the new Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of XXX with the registered charity number of XXX by the Charity Commission on XXX the Parochial Church Council for the Ecclesiastical Parish of XXX needs to be removed from the register of charities.

On XXX (date new parish was formed) the Ecclesiastical Parish of XXX ceased to exist due to the coming into effect of a pastoral scheme for the unification of parishes (scheme attached). As a result of this pastoral scheme, this application is being made to remove the Parochial Church Council for the Ecclesiastical Parish of XXX from the register of charities.

A copy of the final accounts for the Parochial Church Council for the Ecclesiastical Parish of XXX is attached.

Should the Commission require any additional information, please contact me.

Yours sincerely