

Sub Regional Seminar Presentation

LOOKING AHEAD

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In this final session I am going to be looking ahead, exploring some of the provisions of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure which is the enabling, in legal terms, of Mission Shaped Church and which brings new duties for diocesan pastoral committees.

The draft legislation is largely faithful to Toyne. It received its First Approval at General Synod last November, and at the revision stage at General Synod in York, it was clear from the debates that the Synod places a high priority on moving forward the mission of the Church to a new generation.

Diocesan Pastoral Committees

- Pastoral Committee constituted as diocesan synod determines
- Mission and Pastoral Committee
- May be called by another name
- Bishop may chair



Diocesan Pastoral Committees can in the future be constituted pretty much as you wish and can be called whatever you want. It reflects the practice of some Dioceses to have their Bishops Council as the Pastoral Committee.

In the legislation however they will be called the Mission and Pastoral Committee.

Should have roughly a balance of clergy and laity and archdeacons must be members.

New Measure

- New general duty to have “due regard to the furtherance of the Mission of the Church of England – pastoral, social, evangelistic and ecumenical”



There's a new general duty to have regard to the mission of the Church of England – pastoral, social, evangelistic and ecumenical, which I referred to at the beginning of the day.

This will have an impact, particularly in the redundant churches sphere, potentially changing the scope of considerations in the assessment of a suitable use for a closed church building.

It could well give a different meaning to the term “suitable use”.

Closed Churches

- Redundant Churches Uses Committee abolished
- Use seeking process sharpened up
- “Redundant Church” becomes “Church Building Closed for Regular Public Worship”
- Single source of central advice – Council for the Care of Churches which becomes “Church Buildings Council”



On the Redundant Churches side, Redundant Churches Uses Committee are to be abolished. The function passes to the Mission and Pastoral Committee to encourage a joined up and holistic approach to buildings issues.

Mission and Pastoral Committees will be able to appoint sub committees if they wish and some may choose to deal with redundant churches issues in this way. Redundancy is a charged word and is thus being replaced by the word “closure”. Moreover it is not the church that is closing – it’s the building – the church are the people of God.

Thus Redundant Churches become – Church Buildings Closed for Regular Public Worship, and Redundancy Schemes become – Pastoral Church Building Disposal Schemes. And a single central source of advice on buildings issues will be created with the Council for the Care of Churches who are to take over the functions of the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches.

Closed Churches

- Demolition of unlisted buildings outside of conservation areas possible without six months use seeking period



The Pastoral Measure 1968 – which forms the backbone of the current 1983 Measure – it was enacted at the time of the conservation backlash – an era which had seen post war reconstruction and comprehensive redevelopment changing the face of our towns – and had seen many churches demolished. The 1968 Measure required uses to be sought for redundant church buildings.

The proposed change – which will on buildings which are not listed and which are not in a Conservation Area – enable consideration to proceed straight to demolition if desired – represents a small but significant move away from the underlying philosophy which has had the conservation of the built environment as the first consideration.

Pastoral Schemes

- Pastoral Reorganisation Schemes, except where a church closure is involved, to be drafted at diocesan level, not by the Commissioners



Dioceses are to take over from the Commissioners the responsibility for drafting Pastoral Schemes unless they include provision for the closure of a church.

Bishops' Mission Orders

- Any person or group can request Bishop to establish mission initiative
- Bishop himself may decide to promote one
- Key test - “Fostering or developing a form of Christian community”



Probably the most important change or new responsibility for the Mission and Pastoral Committee is the new Bishops Mission Orders. This is the lighter touch enabling of mission initiatives – but with accountability.

Not everything by way of mission will need a Bishop's Mission Order. Much goes on in parish life – the running of alpha courses for instance – which are part of the established church community, Its not meant for projects within the bounds of existing parish life.

Where a Mission Order might be used is when the initiative is likely to result in the establishment of a new church community or Christian community – be it in the workplace, above the pub, or with a church plant.

Its meant to be implemented in a climate of permission but with accountability.

Bishops' Mission Orders

- Bishop should consult on the proposal those he thinks are *significantly* affected
- Significance in each case will depend on scale – parish wide, deanery, diocese wide proposal
- Pastoral Committee to be consulted



The Bishop will need to consult those he thinks significantly affected which might include other churches and religious organisations.

It could, in a proposal affecting a single parish, and, having regard to the objectives of the initiative, involve consultation with the incumbent, PCC and patron.

There will be a Code of Practice offering guidance on consultation issues.

Bishops' Mission Orders

- Can provide for ministry to be exercised in a parish by a person who does not have cure of souls in that place without obtaining the permission of the Minister who has that cure.
- Before making such an Order the Bishop must consult:
 - incumbent or priest in charge if it only affects one parish
 - the House of Clergy of the deanery synod in most other cases



A Bishops Mission Order will be able to override the incumbents veto.

In such circumstances – if only one parish is involved – the incumbent or priest in charge must first be consulted on the proposals.

Often however these may be proposals which affect a whole deanery, maybe a whole diocese – in which case its consultation with the House of Clergy of the Deanery or Diocesan Synod as appropriate.

Bishops' Mission Orders

- May provide for:
 - financial issues such as stipend, remuneration, housing
 - offices which people may hold under the order
 - governance
 - management and control of property
 - protection of vulnerable people, children
 - health and safety
 - relationships with those having cure of souls



The Orders will make provision for the proper governance of Mission Initiatives including finance and housing issues, protection of children, property issues and so on.

Bishops' Mission Orders

- Visitor to exercise oversight
- Review the initiative at intervals, at least 18 months
- Report regularly to Bishop
- Ensure proper accounting records
- Leaders of initiative to consult Visitor regularly about “general direction and development” of the initiative



The appointment of a Bishop's Visitor is an important provision for achieving accountability.

The Visitor is likely to be somebody of the nature of the Diocesan Missioner or Archdeacon, but guidance on this issue will be provided in the Code of Practice.

The Visitor will report regularly to the Bishop, with copies of the report being sent also to the leaders of the Initiative.

Bishops' Mission Orders

- Up to 5 years duration, renewable after consultation with the Mission and Pastoral Committee
- Visitor to conduct review at least six months before expiry of order
- Code of Practice to be agreed by General Synod



A Mission Initiative will need to be reviewed at least six months before the Order is due to expire and the Visitor will make recommendations or comments as the Visitor may think fit.

And, as I have already said, there is to be a House of Bishops Code of Practice, which will need the approval of the General Synod. A draft is going before the House of Bishops in October.

Diocese Commission

- New proactive Diocese Commission
- Able to initiate proposal for diocesan reorganisation as well as those put forward by dioceses



And finally, the existing reactive Diocese Commission is abolished and a new Commission is established which will be able to initiate proposals for diocesan reorganisation.

So that's a brief taste of the the shape of things to come.