

# The Diocese of Canterbury

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Dear Colleagues,

Please see below a letter from Bishop Trevor about the See of Maidstone and a proposal from the Archbishop which went to the Dioceses' Commission today.

Bishop Trevor will be sending this letter across the Diocese at 4pm, which co-ordinates with the national release of a statement by Church House, Westminster.

With kind regards,  
Emily

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04 December 2014

Dear Colleagues,

At Synod earlier this month, Archbishop Justin spoke about the importance of Canterbury Diocese to the worldwide Anglican Communion. He described the Diocese as being the defining point of existence for the communion, saying there was no other 'it' quite like Canterbury.

Of course this is a blessing for the diocese as we are the focus of people's prayers all over the world and that is a real gift. But whenever there is an issue, either in the Church of England or within the Anglican Communion, the answer usually involves Canterbury. As the Primatial See and Metropolitan See, Canterbury Diocese is often called to be generous to members of the Anglican family, a role, that I thank God, we accept graciously.

Today the Archbishop took a proposal to the Dioceses' Commission to enable the Church of England to fulfil the commitment made as part of the legislative process which now allows for the ordination of women as Bishops. This proposal, which has been agreed unanimously, relates specifically to the need for those coming from a conservative evangelical perspective to flourish within the life and structures of the Church of England and will require our diocese to exercise generosity.

In line with the five guiding principles of the declaration, there is a requirement for a Bishop, who takes the conservative evangelical view on headship to have a voice within our episcopal leadership. While the voice of those unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests from a traditional catholic perspective is already represented within the College through the Bishops of Ebbsfleet and Richborough, the voice of those coming from a conservative evangelical perspective is not so represented.

A See is required that would enable a conservative evangelical to give voice to their theological conviction within the College of Bishops, rather than participate in a range of sacramental and other ministries in one diocese as a diocesan or suffragan bishop. Whilst a

role of 'provincial suffragan' (like the PEVs) could meet the intended provision, the law does not at present provide for such an appointment.

Against this background, Maidstone has been identified as the most suitable See for a person nominated for this role. Maidstone is vacant and since our diocese chose to appoint an additional Archdeacon, rather than a suffragan bishop, the See is due to remain vacant for the foreseeable future.

It is worth noting here that the person appointed to Maidstone will hold a national role and therefore will not participate in Canterbury Diocesan Synod, House of Bishops and Vacancy in See Committee, and will exercise no rights to ministerial or other involvement within the diocese, other than might arise from his particular role. The Diocese of Canterbury will carry no financial or other responsibilities for the support of the See of Maidstone or its bishop and the bishop shall not reside in this diocese. Indeed as the Bishop of Maidstone is likely to be licensed as an Assistant Bishop in one or more dioceses (including Chelmsford, Rochester, York and others) a residence will be sought from where he can effectively meet his ministry requirements. The Bishop of Maidstone will, however, have a place within the Foundation of Canterbury Cathedral, as have been the Bishops of Ebbsfleet and Richborough.

I hope you will be reassured to know that the Archbishop's Council of our Diocese has been consulted and have graciously and generously consented to the proposal. The Archbishop and I are deeply grateful for their support and understanding.

If you have any worries or questions about this proposal, please don't hesitate to contact me. Meanwhile, I hope you will join with me in praying for all our brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion and the Church of England, recognising that in our diversity, we are strengthened as one body in Christ.

With my prayers,

Bishop Trevor

*This email has been sent to all clergy, Readers, churchwardens, Lay Chairs, PCC secretaries and administrators. Please share with colleagues not on email.*