

## **The Bishop in Canterbury**

The Right Reverend Trevor Willmott, Bishop of Dover  
The Bishop's Office, Old Palace,  
Canterbury, Kent CT1 2EE  
Telephone: +44 (0) 1227 459382. Fax: 784985  
Email: [trevor.willmott@bishcant.org](mailto:trevor.willmott@bishcant.org)  
Diocesan website: <http://www.canterburydiocese.org>

14<sup>th</sup> September 2014

Dear Colleagues,

### **Guidance notes for parishes in the Diocese of Canterbury on the new pastoral arrangements leading from the General Synod vote enabling the Church to appoint and consecrate women and men as Bishops subject to royal assent**

I am sure you are very well aware, on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014, the Church of England's General Synod passed legislation to enable the Church to appoint and consecrate women, as well as men, as Bishops, subject to royal assent. As you will all know, I rejoice with the decision which the church has now made and look forward to sharing in the consecration of those women who under God we believe are called to episcopal ministry. But equally I remain committed to ensuring that those church communities in our diocese for whom that decision will continue to be problematic will themselves receive the resource, and the prayer necessary for their own flourishing as I know that they will continue to pray and resource for the flourishing of us all.

The decision, which was made on 14<sup>th</sup> July, relies upon trust more than law as the law can only get us so far in helping us to live together rather than merely alongside each other. Archbishop Justin stated that the great challenge for us all as a Church is "to model good disagreement and to continue to demonstrate love for those who disagree on theological grounds. Very few institutions achieve this, but if we manage this we will be living out more fully the call of Jesus Christ to love one another."

I am now writing to all parishes in the Diocese to set out how we shall proceed in this process of conversation.

I have attached for your information a PDF copy of the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests – Guidance notes for Bishops and Priests as well as offering my own explanatory note below, specific to our Diocese, which may be helpful to you. Please refer your PCC Secretary, in particular, to the House of Bishops' guidance for more detailed information if needed.

## **Summary of the new arrangements within the Diocese of Canterbury:**

Any pastoral provisions granted by me for extended episcopal ministry are granted to a given church community by virtue of their PCC granting a resolution followed by discussions with me (i.e. provisions are not made specifically for *individuals* who on theological grounds cannot accept women bishops or priests and the passing of a PCC resolution in itself does not automatically trigger extended episcopal oversight).

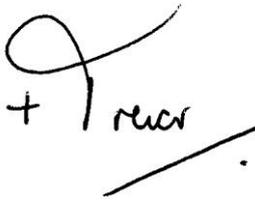
- If your parish is supportive of the ordination of women to the priesthood and consecration of women as bishops you do not need to take any further action, unless you have already passed resolutions A or B (see next bullet point).
- If your PCC has already passed resolutions A or B and petitioned for extended episcopal ministry under the Act of Synod (often mistakenly known as resolution C) please start to consult your congregation and PCC as widely as possible prior to a resolution being brought for debate at PCC, noting that:
  1. You have a window of two years, from the commencement of the new measure, for this consultation period in which to explore, pass a resolution at PCC (to take advantage of the new arrangements available for those parishes who, on grounds of theological conviction are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests) and to discuss extended episcopal provision with me (ending in November 2016).
  2. Any resolutions (A or B) which the PCC had passed will continue to be in force for three years after the commencement of the new measure, after which time they will automatically cease to have effect in November 2017 (with the possibility of their effect being terminated earlier, where either the PCC who passed a resolution rescinds it after due consultation or, where the parish is in a multi-parish benefice the PCC of another parish in the benefice wishes a resolution to cease to have effect in the benefice).
  3. The parish's consultation process should include a motion set before the PCC, for debate (see guidance notes: "passing a resolution").
  4. Any petition to me for extended episcopal provision made by your PCC must now be made only on the grounds of theological conviction.
  5. Once I have received your PCC resolution (your petition), I will begin a conversation with the nominated members of your PCC (see guidance notes: conversations between the bishop and the PCC) to discern what kind of extended episcopal provision I think might best suit the needs of your parish.

6. In the Diocese of Canterbury, any resolution passed is expected to be reviewed every 5 years or at the point of vacancy.

I hope very much that the contents of this letter encourage us all 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 and that we will as fellow members of the body of Christ in this Diocese, commit ourselves to good, ongoing and open conversation, continuing to build trust with one another in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch with me should you need further information or to present your PCC's resolution and petition.

With my prayers and blessing,



A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'T' followed by the name 'Trevor' in a cursive script. A horizontal line is drawn underneath the signature.