

Pastoral Reorganisation



DIOCESE OF
GLOUCESTER



Pastoral Reorganisation

The diocesan answer to what, why, who and how ... all you ever wanted to know but were afraid to ask.

Pastoral Reorganisation is common in the diocese. Parishes join together, boundaries are changed, teams are formed, fresh expressions develop and occasionally churches are closed. All of these come under the umbrella of 'Pastoral Reorganisation'. Many people are involved and the situations are often complex. This booklet outlines the process step by step, makes clear who is responsible for each element, and clarifies lines of communication.

The flow chart at Appendix A of this booklet may tell you all you need to know, but this booklet gives a little more information and also points to further help and resources if needed.

Stage I: Why?

There are many reasons that pastoral reorganisation may be suggested or proposed. Here are some of them:

Theological Reasons eg

- Because we are the body of Christ and in relationship with one another.
- To better enable the sharing of the Gospel

Practical Reasons eg

- To make a bigger benefice, ie group parishes together.
- Because of reducing clergy numbers.
- Congregation numbers may be decreasing and therefore a parish is no longer viable on its own.
- Parish share: in order to meet the level required to have a priest, parishes may need to join up.
- Because church buildings may no longer be viable.
- To join PCCs and make one PCC for a benefice thus using people and resources more effectively.
- In order to share skills.
- Due to issues of demographic and population movement/changes.

Missional Reasons eg

- Because of a Bishop's Mission Order.
- In order to enable effective mission and ministry.
- In order to form a team ministry.
- As part of a bigger vision.
- As part of a Mission Action Plan.
- Because of changes in society, ie to facilitate a church that will continue through the 21st Century.

Strategic Reasons eg

- In order to focus resources, both people and finance.
- As a way of problem solving.
- In order to liberate energy.
- To give a variety of voices and range of perspectives.

Whatever the presenting reasons, it is important always to ask more deeply: **Why are we doing this?**

Any plan for Pastoral Reorganisation must be in line with our Diocesan Strategy: **Journeying Together** which states that our mission is, 'To share the transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ with people in and around Gloucestershire'.

Any Pastoral Reorganisation needs to have this mission as its end and goal. When considering PR we must always first ask, 'Will this enable and allow us to:

- Worship Together more effectively?
- Share our Christian Faith and Values more effectively?
- Provide a Visible presence in every Community and Parish more effectively?
- And Serve the Wider World more effectively?

If the honest answer is 'no' then do not begin the process. Explore other options.

Pastoral Reorganisation however may enable our mission in Journeying Together to be fulfilled by offering, for example, greater flexibility, better resourcing of ministry, better use of buildings, more effective governance, greater support and team work, sustainable worship patterns etc. If the answer to the questions above is 'yes' then please continue.

Stage 2: Who?

This is the stage of **informal** discussion/conversation and idea-sharing. Initially the conversations may bubble up, there is no particular order for these informal discussions, but often these discussions start with:

Area Dean, Archdeacon, Clergy and Church Wardens (with the Bishop informed at an early stage)

If the discussion 'has legs' conversation is broadened to include the Deanery Lay Chair, the Deanery Standing committee, and the Bishop's staff including the Diocesan Secretary.

Broadening further the conversation extends to the Deanery Chapter, the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group, the Department of Mission and Ministry, the PCCs, the Churches Officer and any others who might offer support and advice, remembering that this is still an informal stage of the process.

If as a result of these discussions a proposal is likely to be made, the Patrons, the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Group and other interested groups, eg community groups or schools, can be included in the conversation.

Informal discussions inevitably mean that some people hear/discuss before others. We encourage a relaxed approach to this. Nothing is decided at this stage, it is a stage for gathering thoughts and hearing ideas or concerns.

To facilitate this stage it may be helpful to set up **A Review Group**, with for example the Area Dean, Lay Chair, Archdeacon and two or three others. They shape the process, document the reasons and ensuing discussions and write a paper that includes narrative, evidence, options and criteria for evaluating the options. (see Appendix B)

Stage 3: What?

This is a point of decision-making. There are a number of formal, informal or less formal options that could be considered, before drawing up proposals that lead to legal changes. For example:

- Informal relationships between parishes with clergy cross-licensed. This could be for a time or season.
- A Bishop's Mission Order which recognizes a Fresh Expression of church or an emerging church and facilitates its relationship with the wider church. It could be used to establish a new mission area in, for example, a new housing estate. There is a different process to follow and if a BMO seems best for you, consult with the Archdeacons and Director of Mission and Ministry and read no further!
- A scheme to hold benefices in plurality. This is a simple scheme, where livings are not necessarily suspended and patrons still have rights, and where housing is secured.
- Suspension. The living is suspended, which may be during vacancy and a priest-in charge may be appointed. If a deanery plans for a lot of reorganisation there may be a need for a series of suspensions as parishes become vacant. This may be necessary for the long-term goal and needs to be seen as part of the bigger picture. However ideally suspensions should be seen as a short-term option as much as possible. It can be helpful as a way to 'see if this works' before legalising a new benefice.
- Legal changes such as the redrawing of parish boundaries, the reconfiguring of parishes and formation of a benefice or the closure of churches. All of these require a move to the next stage.

Stage 4: Formal Consultations

- Draft proposals are drawn up (by the Pastoral Secretary, overseen by the Archdeacons' office and with the involvement of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Group and the Bishop's Council) and circulated to all interested parties with an invitation to comment or meet with the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Group (DMPG) or the Archdeacons.
- Comments and views are received and considered by DMPG who may then revise the proposals.
- Draft proposals and views received from interested parties are presented to the Bishop. If the Bishop agrees he signs and returns them to the Pastoral Secretary.
- The Pastoral Secretary prepares a draft scheme and sends it to the Church Commissioners who ensure the scheme is correct and that due process has been followed.

Stage 5: Representation Period.

- The Church Commissioners (CCs), once content with the draft scheme, return it to the Pastoral Secretary for circulation and publication within the communities, with an invitation for comments to be sent to the Church Commissioners. At this stage it can feel to some rather frustrating, they may say: 'We've had these discussions already! We've been consulted informally, formally and now we're being asked to comment again!' But be patient. This is the due process to follow and it does make sure that if/when it comes to pass all interested parties have had plenty of opportunities to ask questions, be heard and express their views. Remember that we 'go slow' at this stage in order to 'go fast' later, because any objections will have been heard and considered.
- The CCs will consider all representations and ask for the Bishop's comments on them. The Bishop may advise the CCs to amend the draft scheme.
- The CCs will consider all the representations and decide whether the scheme should be made.
- If they decide for the scheme, the decision and reasons for the decision are circulated by the Pastoral Secretary to all interested parties.
- There is a right of appeal to the Privy Council which may involve a formal hearing.

This is the end of the process ... but the beginning of the new scheme in practice. All the people who have been consulted now need to make it work.

Further help and resources:

Key websites:

www.churchofenglad.org/clergy-office-holders/pastoralandclosedchurches

www.freshexpressions.org.uk

For the 'everything you need to know' flow chart see Appendix A

For setting up a review group see Appendix B

For help/support/advice at any stage contact the appropriate Archdeacon.

Archdeacon of Gloucester
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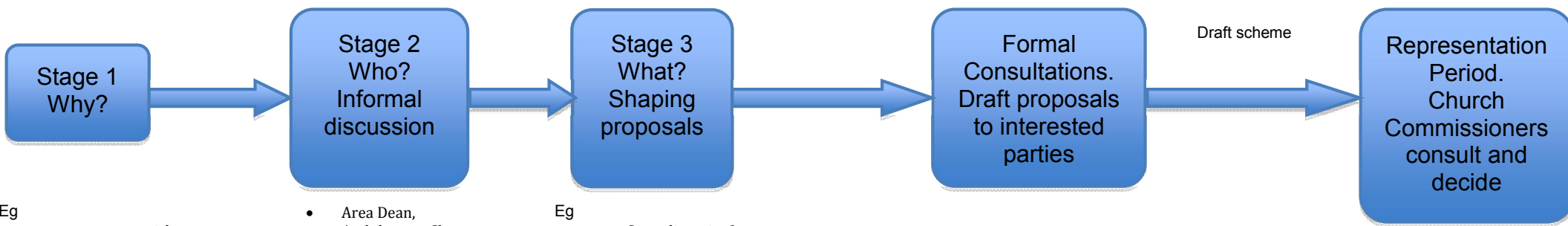
archdchelt@glosdioc.org.uk
01452.835594

For initial discussions contact your Area Dean and/or Deanery Lay Chair

The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Group is chaired by the Bishop of Tewkesbury
The Bishop's Office, 2 College Green, Gloucester, GL1 2LR

The Mission and Ministry Department can be especially helpful at the ideas stage
4 College Green, Gloucester, GL1 2LR. T. 01452 835549

Pastoral Reorganisation
The flow chart



- Eg
- to group parishes together
 - as part of deanery plan
 - to better use resources
 - to close a church
 - to make a BMO
 - to form a team ministry

- Area Dean, Archdeacon, Clergy, Churchwardens, Bishop
- Lay Chair, Deanery Standing Committee (MPG), Bishop's Staff, Diocesan Secretary
- Chapter, PCCs
- Patrons, Mission & Pastoral Secretary, Local groups eg schools
- others

- Eg
- Cross-licensing?
 - BMO?
 - Team Ministry?
 - Plurality?
 - Suspension?
 - Boundary changes?
 - New benefice or parish/es?

- Draft proposals circulated by Diocesan MPG
- Comments and views to MPG, who may revise proposals.
- Proposals go to Bishop, plus views and comments. If he agrees, proposals signed and returned to pastoral secretary.
- The signed proposal is sent to the Church Commissioners.

- Draft scheme circulated to parishes/communities for responses to CCs.
- CCs consider all representations and ask for Bishop's comments on representations. The Bishop may advise CCs to amend the draft scheme.
- CCs make decision.
- The decision and the reasons for it are circulated to all interested parties.
- There is a right of appeal.

Set up a review group to shape the process and communicate

PASTORAL REVIEWS

A Pastoral review usually takes place where

- There is a need for change
- A number of different parties have legitimate interests
- There is not one obvious solution
- There is the potential for conflict

The Process

The Archdeacon prepares a background paper in consultation with the Area Dean and the Review Group. This is discussed with the Deanery Pastoral group to obtain their good will for a review to be undertaken.

A review group is then established by the Archdeacon in consultation with the Area Dean and Deanery Pastoral Group. In addition to the Archdeacon and Area Dean it should consist of at least one lay person (possibly the Deanery Lay Chair) and another appropriate person chosen to give objectivity to the process.

The group meets initially to identify who the key parties for consultation are and how and in what order they will be consulted. Usually members of the group will work individually in the consultations.

Having consulted the various parties the review group meets to review their findings and make initial recommendations. These are shared with those consulted to ensure that their views have been heard and not misrepresented and to gauge the reaction to the proposals.

The review group then meets a further time to consider the response received to their views, reformulates these views where necessary and makes recommendations to the Deanery Pastoral Group.

The Deanery Pastoral Group in turn makes recommendations to the Diocesan Pastoral Group which may if appropriate result in the drawing up of a pastoral scheme.