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1 The Business of the Mission & Pastoral Committee [DMPC]

Like many dioceses at this time, Birmingham has been re-evaluating how resources should be deployed. This was the basis for the "Called to a New Kingdom" exercise, and culminated in a strategy identified by, and for, each deanery.

Many of the specific proposals in these strategies have legal implications because of the established nature of the Church of England. The [process](#) by which proposals are brought into effect is the bread-and-butter casework of the DMPC, and the Pastoral Subcommittee [PSC] which reports to it.

By far the most detail can be found at the Pastoral Administration section of the [Church Commissioners' website](#) (including their extremely helpful article of [common questions](#)). Their very useful list of [definitions are there](#). But by all means feel free to [put your own question](#) to the PSC secretary.

When Church of England churches do reorganise, there is often a need to acquire or dispose of liturgical furniture and other contents. [The Closed Churches Division](#) of the Church Commissioners periodically publishes a national list of what's available or wanted, called the [Central Contents Register](#).



2. How pastoral Schemes and Orders progress

Schemes and Orders are the formal documents by which changes are made in the process of reorganising Church of England parishes, benefices, and collaboration of clergy, "for the better provision of the cure of souls".

What follows are key points (much more is available [here](#)):

1
Formal pastoral reorganisation is brought about by **Pastoral Schemes and Orders**, under provisions of the [Pastoral Measure 1983 and its amendments](#);

2
Orders require less consultation, are therefore quicker, but apply only to simpler matters, such as altering areas, names, deaneries, establishing pluralities, and amending Team Ministries;

3



Schemes are needed for everything else. Commonest type involve transfer of parish between benefices; creation of new benefice/parish; union of benefices/parishes; appropriation or disposal of consecrated churchyard; Group ministry; Team ministry; closure (formerly "redundancy") of a consecrated church building and alternative use, including demolition;

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Schemes and Orders each involve consultation with 7 **statutory interested parties** [SIPs] in each affected parish. SIPs comprise: incumbent or priest-in-charge, PCC, area dean, archdeacon, benefice patron, deanery synod lay chair, and the local planning authority view is invited;

5

The diocesan office circulates **draft proposals**, on behalf of the PSC, to ascertain views of SIPs;

6

If any place of worship is proposed for closure, PSC is required to consider an **independent report** on its architectural quality and historic significance (from [the Church Buildings Council](#)). In turn, the CBC's caseworker will need local opinion from the [Diocesan Advisory Committee \[DAC\]](#) before visiting to compile it, so at least 2 visits to the church by "outsiders" will need to take place;

7

With Pastoral Orders, if all SIPs support the proposals (or fail to lodge an objection in time), the registrar invites the bishop to **sign the Order**, which he then seals and it becomes law;

8

If a Pastoral Scheme is necessary (or an objection is made), PSC considers SIPs' responses. It can recommend to the DMPC that the draft proposals be amended. Once amended, it may still be possible to sign an Order;

9

If the matter requires a Scheme, the bishop signs proposals and invites the [Commissioners' Pastoral Division \[CCPD\]](#) to liaise with diocesan officers to prepare a **draft Scheme**, which the local diocese circulates to the same SIPs;

10

Any objection, from a SIP or another person with due interest, must be considered by the [Commissioners' Pastoral Committee \[CPC\]](#), based in London.

11

If all SIPs support the draft, or if the CPC judges that proposals should go ahead despite objection, the CCPD "makes [i.e. confirms] the Scheme". It then **becomes law**. This replaces the need until a few years ago to seek royal assent from Her Majesty in Privy Council;

12

Schemes take effect either (a) immediately, (b) on the first day of the month following confirmation, or (c) "on a date to be determined by the Church Commissioners after consultation with the Bishop". There are reasons why the immediate effect of a Scheme is not desired, so not all are brought into effect straightaway.

The above steps are illustrated by [CCPD](#) in a [flowchart](#), from where examples of common Schemes and Orders (and the full [Code Of Practice to the Pastoral Measure](#)) can also be had. Definitions of commonly used terms are below.

3. DEFINITIONS used in the work of pastoral reorganisation

Being rather lengthy, please [see this separate article](#).

4. The CENTRAL CONTENTS REGISTER of the Church of England

The Church Commissioners give no warranty as to the accuracy of the descriptions of items in this Register [published here for ease of dissemination, but not authored by the diocese of Birmingham] or that those items may be legally disposed of.

People wishing to acquire any item listed must rely on their own inspection or examination of the item in question and on their own enquiries of the person seeking to dispose of it. To install in a building subject to faculty jurisdiction, you will need to seek a faculty via the DAC secretary of the diocese in which the proposed church is situated. [If that's in Birmingham, contact the [Birmingham DAC secretary](#)].

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List of [Wanted Contents](#)