

guidelines for dioceses supporting rural church plants

transition to maturity, legal recognition, creating a community centre and uniting PCCs/

This document may be useful for those supporting or planting fresh expressions of church in rural multi-parish benefices. They were originally written as appendices to the book Sally Gaze, mission-shaped and rural, CHP, 2006 at £7.99.

Guidelines for Dioceses to aid a staged process of transition to maturity and legal recognition for rural church plants

The Report “Breaking new ground” published in 1994 contained guidelines for a staged process of transition to maturity and legal recognition for church plants¹. The Mission-shaped church report recommended that “the latest version of these guidelines and the good practice they reflect should be adopted by each diocese.” This appendix offers an initial revision of those guidelines with the intention that they should be useful in the support of rural church plants and fresh expressions of church in their growth to maturity. This revision has been made in collaboration with George Lings, the author of the original guidelines. We have generally maintained the terminology of “church plant” and not

‘the latest version of these guidelines and the good practice they reflect should be adopted by each diocese.’

replaced it with the overlapping term “fresh expression” because it makes clearer the aim that the church plant/fresh expression should be established as a mature church in its own right.

One of the major changes made in the revision is the suggested time scales for each stage of the plant/fresh expression. The original guidelines set quite specific time frames, based on a

¹ The original guidelines form appendix 1 of ‘Breaking New Ground’: GS 1099 1994, CHP. They are available on www.encountersontheedge.org.uk.

practice of church planting which predominantly involved the growing of a congregation in a new geographical area. If network and non-congregation-based forms of church are to be taken into account these norms no longer necessarily apply. Factors which can affect the time it takes for a church plant to grow to a degree of maturity include the strength of the planting team and the degree of openness to the gospel of the people group which the plant intends to reach. In rural church-planting, many fresh expressions have begun in the last few years, with only the resources of small rural congregations. This means that we may expect growth to be more limited by the strength of the planting team than in the case of planting teams which have come from large well resourced congregations. In addition, we are aware that there are few rural fresh expressions which have been in existence for over five years - so suggested time frames are provisional because we are entering largely uncharted territory. Nevertheless, it is important to go through this staged process with initial targets and time frames in mind, so that these may be revised consciously along the way and lessons learned.

Stage 1: Birth and Infancy² (first 2-4 years)

The characteristic of this stage is for a church plant to grow, through evangelistic contacts, from a small mission team, normally less than seven people, to forming a larger group and then a small church. This stage will be dependent, vulnerable and lack stability through the influx of new people and the demands of their pastoral needs. If a “fresh expression”

² This stage corresponds to the stage described as ‘Beginning from a small group - to form a congregation’ and ‘Pioneer Plants’ in the 1994 guidelines



is the initiative of a local church, it may not be clear at this stage whether it is going to become a fully fledged church in its own right or remain a mission initiative of one or more churches.³

1. It is essential that an authorised leader of the plant possesses pioneering evangelistic gifts and is able to train others to share this ministry.
2. A prime task in this stage is for the entire team to build contacts and friendships with those outside the group.

³ See my comment on p.73: “To say something is a ‘mission initiative’, rather than a fresh expression of church/church plant is not to downgrade it. Both are good and important. However, making the distinction between the two is important because this tells us about the vision for the future. A mission initiative will develop as part of existing church structures, contributing to the expression of the 4 marks of church within the whole. Good mission initiatives will nevertheless be a challenge to the existing church which if healthy, will find itself reshaped by its participation in that mission. Fresh expressions of church seek to grow the 4 marks of church within themselves. They also need to work from dependence and interdependence from the planting church.” Examples of fresh expressions/church plants in this book include - Contemplative Fire, Fountain of Life, Tas Valley Cell Church. Examples of rural mission initiatives which it would not be desirable to make into a separate church include the Post Office at Sheepy Magna, the Farmers’ Market at Shipbourne and Hidden Britain Centres. Examples of fresh expressions which may develop into church plants or remain mission initiatives include Cafep/us+ & Service in the School.

3. Equally important is the discovery and enabling of gifts in ministry that will enable a church to function effectively once it has begun. But gifts without teamwork are a recipe for explosive anarchy. Building team relationships in the embryonic church is a primary task.

4. In traditional plants, before the launch of public worship, it is vital to have designated leaders of the following in place; children's work, a worship team, house groups and nurture groups. Fresh Expressions starting round small groups or those designed to contact the non churched will not make public worship their starting place. The important gifts are those which build community and trust, both within the church and in the wider community.

5. Formal governmental structures are usually unhelpful at this stage. but the plant will normally need to have its own leadership team. The plant is still embryonic or childlike and the membership not stable. There should be good representation of the plant's leadership team on the appropriate body, whether parent PCC(s), Benefice Council, Joint PCC or Wardens' Meeting.

6. Financial obligations to the Parish and Diocese should be kept minimal at this stage, and it is to be expected that the Plant will be a net receiver within the budget of the planting benefice/deanery/diocese, but not on an indefinite basis.

7. After 2-4 years, the direction of the group should be clear - the viability of the venture and suitability of the leadership should be reviewed by the parent church leadership and/or the Diocese to see whether it is on the way to becoming church in its own right. Across the range of fresh expressions, church will not always mean congregation and could be a network of small groups, which

nevertheless are church. Here, the goal is that the church plant matures and continues to make disciples, not that it change to congregational form. Bearing this in mind, it may sometimes be clear that the project, although successful, should remain a mission initiative with permanent links to an existing church or churches (and not aim to become a separate church plant). Sometimes, the initiative will be seen not to be viable in the long term.

Stage 2: Growing Up⁴ (next 3-7 years)

The characteristic of this stage is growing independence - the progress from the public beginning of a small church (perhaps about 20 weekly attendance) to the formation of a church with clear self-identity and some autonomy, expressed terms of legal status. There should be expectation of numerical growth perhaps up to 50 - 100 weekly attendance, but expectations should be worked out according to context. In rural contexts, where some existing parish churches have less than ten members, a much smaller church than that of 50 members can be both viable and successful. It may be helpful to think of reaching 2-5% of the people group for whom the church plant has been begun. There should be attendant growth in Christian maturity.

1. The authorised leader continues to need to have evangelistic gifts, and the ability to train others in this ministry.
2. During this period, it may be that the initial leader will move on. Experience of church-planting, shows it is crucial that moves are made to ensure continuity of leadership, both of the plant itself and of the benefice, if the plant is part of a wider benefice. Where the plant has been

⁴ Stage 2 corresponds to the stage described as 'The first five years of a new or small congregation of 20+' and 'Progression Plants' in the 1994 guidelines.

lay led, either exploration of LNSM ministry or the possible appointment of stipendiary clergy should occur. The possibility of appointing 'house-for-duty' clergy, should be treated with care. It is important that the leaders of the plant comes with the vision of pioneering, evangelism, training and enabling and not the idea of completing certain duties which may be implied by the phrase house-for-duty. Full sacramental life, without use of clergy from outside the plant's leadership team, is a characteristic of the maturing church.

3. The task of the new church is to continue to grow according to expectation. This will be helped through continued evangelisation, by careful pruning of unnecessary activity, evolving worship and structures suitable to a larger membership as well as the surrounding culture and allowing wider leadership than "the curate/vicar" or the dominant family to develop.

4. Training members to lead will be crucial to growth in maturity. Forms of tutored distance learning could be explored, for to evangelize and also to train is a heavy burden on the one Leader.

5. New people who join the plant after its start must be reminded of the founding vision and missionary identity of the church. Otherwise the danger of institutionalising the plant will set in or it may become dominated by reacting to internal pastoral needs.

6. Church life needs to be kept as slim as possible. In rural multiparish benefice contexts, this can be a particular challenge, since people involved with a church plant will often also feel an obligation to their village church. It is important that the total amount of church involvement of members leaves them

time and space for building relationships with non-church people. eg. Usually no more than the equivalent of attendance at only one midweek small group and one service of congregational worship.

7. Decisions about use of ecclesiastical or secular buildings should be shaped by the mission of the plant and not driven by financial concerns or current under use of existing church buildings. Where existing church buildings lack suitable facilities such as heating, lighting, electricity or comfortable seating, this must be recognized as a potential brake on mission.

8. Flexibility in worship for cultural reasons can be legally granted through the Bishop's discretionary power under Canons B 11 and 11A. The drive for intimacy and corporate identity should respect proper needs for privacy and anonymity and leave space for the transcendent. Different forms of worship are appropriate for gatherings of cells, congregations and larger scale celebrations.

9. The plant should aim by the end of an agreed period (suggested 3-7 years) to be financially self-sufficient for all running expenses, excepting the total cost of its paid leadership through the "parish share". In this period the plant should be assessed for "parish share" calculated through some previously agreed form of relief. For example, assessment could be from the attendance figures collected for two years previously, as a high proportion of members will be new people whose purses are by no means yet converted. It may also need to be taken into account that a larger proportion of members of rural plants may have dual membership with a parish church. By the end of this agreed period, the plant should be paying the equivalent of at least half the cost of the time of its paid staff.

10. A planned interim review after say two years, should reassess the aims of the plant and what has helped or hindered growth in this period.

11. Within the same time frame, a form of government ought to be in place. In a multiparish benefice, this ought to be equivalent to other churches in the benefice together with proportionate representation on the benefice council. All solutions will be set by Anglican legal forms held in tension with local cultural norms.

Stage 3: Early Adulthood, Continuing to Mature⁵ (3-7 more years)

The characteristic of this phase is growing interdependence - becoming a mature, adult church within the diocese - self-governing, self-financing and gaining the potential to self-reproduce where and when appropriate. The expectation should be of numerical growth perhaps to between 50 and 200 weekly attendance - but expectations should be worked out according to context. It may be helpful to think of reaching 5-20% of the people group for whom the church plant has been begun as well as growth in depth and maturity. Maturity may be signalled by the ability to produce disciples, leaders and offer gifts to the wider church, as well as the potential to reproduce once more.

1. A key task is to build a team of leaders who, between them, have gifts in pastoral care, public teaching, and administration as well as evangelism. If the original plant leader possesses gifts in administration, teaching and pastoral care he/she may be invited to continue to be the main leader. If not a fresh leader, standing in the same tradition, with these gifts for developing the plant should be appointed. The leadership team

⁵ Stage three corresponds to the stage described as 'The second five years after planting a small congregation' in the 1994 guidelines.

needs at least one ordained, and at least one gifted evangelistically and able to train in evangelism. This is to provide the basis for further sustained growth and to facilitate any future planting when appropriate.⁶

2. By the beginning of this stage a plant which has been lay led in stage 2, should be developing some form of ordained leadership.

3. Leaders need to present continuing evangelisation as the task of the whole congregation and keep church life slim to match.

4. During this stage demands to settle in a building that is owned may be made. In the rural context underused ecclesiastical buildings will be part of the backdrop to this desire. In considering any change in buildings use, the continued evangelisation of the neighbourhood, culture or network should be paramount. The desire to settle down is strong but often leads to a premature plateau, unless there is strong leadership for continued mission.

5. An agreed period should be fixed with the diocese, for the plant to work towards being released from dependent status on a mother church. During this period the plant should form something equivalent to an acting PCC if it has not already done so. Throughout this period the Diocese should encourage the parent church(es) to prepare to, and before

⁶ George Lings comments on the 'abbott' and 'bishop' roles within a fresh expression may be helpful here. See George Lings, *Northumbria Community: Matching Monastery and Mission*, Encounters on the Edge 29, pp27-29. In some church plants, this need to build a leadership team may arise much earlier in stage 2. This may be particularly true where the pioneer leader is also the incumbent of the sending church or churches.

the end of this time, actually release the plant from any child or dependent status. By the end of the period, the planted church should have equivalent status to a parish church or within a team parish - equivalent status to other churches in the team.

6. Decisions about the future allocation of ordained staff to the planted church (and to the benefice of which it may be a part) should take equal notice of size of membership as of parish size.

7. By the end of this period, all permanent financial subsidy from the parent church should cease and diocesan quota will be payable on the normal rate, with a measure of agreed relief in respect of new fringe members.

8. Before this period is completed, consultation with the Diocese should begin, to consider and assist a further plant from this new church and/or from across the benefice.

Legal options for the authorisation of rural fresh expressions as Churches

In a measure for Measure for Measures⁷ a key recommendation was made:

Recommendation 18

New provision should be made for episcopally authorised "Mission Initiatives", with a clear and transparent method for their creation, renewal and termination. This should include a new category of Bishop's Order to provide for experimental arrangements, while the Pastoral Order procedure should apply both to give greater permanence to such initially experimental arrangements and in recognising existing

⁷ *A Measure for Measures: In Mission and Ministry - Report of the Dioceses Pastoral and related Measures*, CHP, 2004

arrangements which have grown out of the framework of the Measure⁸ and seek integration into the church's structures. The Code of Practice should give guidance on the desirable characteristics of such initiatives. The legislation should make provision for dealing with the funds and property issues connected with mission initiatives. The need for amendments to other legislation, for example to enable participation in representative structures such as the deanery, should be pursued.

This is the key recommendation designed to facilitate the setting up and legal recognition of Fresh Expressions of Church. At the time of writing, it has not yet been acted upon. However, there are some currently available, if more cumbersome, ways in which authorisation and recognition can be achieved.

The traditional way of recognising new "churches" has been through the creation of an Extra Parochial Place (EPP). These can be set up under the provisions of section 17.1 of the Pastoral Measure 1983⁹. They are usually defined in effect by a building licensed for worship, but lie outside the normal church representation arrangements with only limited representation on deanery synods¹⁰. Since an EPP is not a body corporate then building ownership/leasing and the reclamation of tax through gift aid will require the setting up of a trust

⁸ The Pastoral Measure 1983. The Pastoral Measure 1983 is designed for use in changing the arrangements for the ministry in the church and covers such things as pastoral reorganisation eg. creating new benefices.

⁹ A fully amended version of the Pastoral Measure can be downloaded from www.cofe.anglican.org/about/churchcom/missioners/pastoral/legislation.

¹⁰ *A Measure for Measures: In Mission and Ministry - Report of the Dioceses Pastoral and related Measures*, CHP, 2004, par3.19.

unless it comes under the control of another body eg a PCC.

Fresh expressions with a building

For fresh expressions with a building it would appear that a much better approach than an EPP would be to create a new parish using the same provision in the Pastoral Measure (17.1) as is used to create an EPP. The new parish boundary would be boundary of the new church's building, which would have to be licensed for worship. The process is as follows:

1. Consult with the area Archdeacon (not a formal part of the procedure, but a good idea, particularly when using the Pastoral Measure in this novel way).
2. Wide local consultation (prior to beginning the formal procedure)
3. A PCC or the Diocesan Pastoral Committee (DPC) passes resolutions for the establishment of a new parish.
4. The DPC seeks the views of the 'interested parties' eg. relevant incumbents, patrons, PCCs, archdeacons, rural deans, lay chairmen of deanery synods and Local Planning Authorities.
5. On receipt of the views of interested parties the DPC may decide for a variety of reasons not to pursue the proposals; if it decides to proceed, they must be submitted to the bishop for approval.
6. If the bishop approves the recommendations he sends them to the Church Commissioners in the form of a proposal and informs the DPC that he has done so.
7. The DPC then sends copies of the proposals to the interested parties so that they know that this stage had been reached.

8. The Commissioners draw up the bishop's proposals in to a legal form as a draft pastoral scheme. This is published for consultation to the interested parties.

9. If there are objections, the Commissioners adjudicate. People may make oral representations or objections to the Commissioners Pastoral Committee and representatives from the relevant diocese may also make representations. The Commissioners must give reasons for their decisions. (If the Commissioners allow a contested scheme to proceed, objectors can seek to appeal against the Commissioners' decision to the Privy Council.)

10. The scheme can become law (subject to any appeal.)

Fresh expressions without permanent buildings eg. network churches

In contrast to fresh expressions with buildings, a network church, which does not have a specific building which could be licensed for public worship, may not gain legal recognition by becoming a parish church. Whilst waiting for the hoped for Mission Initiative legislation, the option that most fresh expressions have adopted has been to be financially linked to the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) and to operate a DBF account whilst being accountable either to an incumbent, but more usually a bishop or archdeacon. The DBF account allows for appropriate financial scrutiny and tax can be reclaimed on giving (since the DBF is a charity). Another technically possible, but untried temporary possibility for a fresh expression of church working in network style - eg all the parishes of one rural multi-parish benefice - is the creation of a Conventional District¹¹

¹¹ See Lynne Leader, *Sweet and Maxwell*, Ecclesiastical Law Handbook, London, 1997 Section 4.4 pp75-76.

with a curate-in-charge. Such a district can be created by the diocesan bishop at the request of the incumbent without the need for a pastoral scheme and does not require the fresh expression to have a permanent place of worship. Usually such a district has been created for a daughter church as a stepping stone to becoming a parish in its own right but there is no reason why a Conventional District should not cover the entire area of a benefice or a nominal area within any parish of a willing incumbent. In a rural environment that incumbent may also be the Fresh Expression leader and it would therefore be necessary for them to be made the Conventional District's "curate in charge" (normally whilst retaining their existing roles). The intention would be that the fresh expression for whom the Conventional District is created should continue to co-exist with the parish churches and work in a complementary way. However, Conventional Districts were not created with this in mind and are essentially temporary phenomena, vulnerable to changes in incumbents and bishops on whose good will their continued existence depends. The existence of a Conventional District must be renewed if it is to continue at a change of incumbent. For the period of the existence of the Conventional District, the Fresh Expression becomes fully accountable, with the same standing as any traditional form church, including representation in the wider church structures, with its own PCC and churchwardens. In addition fresh expression members can also be full participants in traditional forms of church by being on the electoral rolls of both.

Processes for the creation of a community centre in a church building which is also licensed for worship

The Pastoral (Amendment) Measure, due to be passed in 2006 will allow

parts of church buildings to be leased under faculty for wider community use. To find out more about this process, contact the Council for the Care of Churches or the Church Commissioners.

Where PCCs are for one reason or another, too weak to maintain their building and undertake such a significant missionary project or in a situation where the main use of the entire building will be for community use, a solution such as that outlined below may be helpful. This process requires a pastoral scheme that makes all or part of the church building "redundant" in order that it can become a community centre, run by another community body and within the same scheme the bishop may then licence the building for public worship, designating it as a parish centre of worship. Such schemes are governed by the Pastoral Measure 1983¹². The status of the parish and the PCC is unaffected. Buildings or parts of buildings designated as parish centres of worship are deemed to be parish churches (section 29.2 of the Measure) and will therefore operate as such, allowing Sunday services, weddings, funerals, baptisms etc to continue to take place.¹³ The process is as follows:

1. Consult with the area Archdeacon and Diocesan Bishop. It will be

¹² A fully amended version of the Pastoral Measure can be downloaded from www.cofe.anglican.org/about/churchcom/missioners/pastoral/Legislation. The Pastoral Measure 1983 is designed for use in changing the arrangements for the ministry in the church and covers such things as pastoral reorganisation (mainly putting parishes together into unions or teams or groups), and dealing with the setting up and redundancy of church buildings and places of worship. Using the Pastoral Measure 1983 for this purpose is unusual.

¹³ See Section 29 of the Pastoral Measure, paragraphs 1-2. In addition, those living in a parish with a parish centre of worship may elect to have their marriage conducted in a neighbouring parish (par3).

important to establish that the Diocesan Bishop is supportive of the scheme in principle before local people begin to get enthusiastic about the possibilities.

2. Wide local consultation, prayer and discussion. This may take a very long period of time. The transfer of ownership of a church building is a major step and there needs to be a shared conviction that this is what God is calling the church to do, prior to beginning any formal procedure.
3. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) passes a resolution for pastoral scheme that will make all or part of the church building redundant¹⁴ in order that its ownership can be transferred to a suitable body, trust or charity, who will convert the building for use as a community centre (section 47.1 of the Measure) with a view to the building also becoming a parish centre of worship.
4. The scheme may also provide for the churchyard to be transferred to the same body or alternatively to the parish council and the uses of this land may be specified. (section 51.2 of the Measure). Hence, if a PCC can no longer care adequately for the churchyard, the scheme might specify that the church yard continues to be used as a burial ground but in the care of the parish council instead of the PCC.
5. Arrangements will need to be made for the plate, font and communion table - these could (and probably in the case of the plate - should) remain

¹⁴ It is possible for only part of the building to be made redundant, reserving the chancel for worship. However, if this is the desired route forward, it will probably make more sense to use the new provisions under the Pastoral (Amendment) Measure, due to be passed in 2006 to seek a faculty for parts of the building to be leased for wider community.

in the hands of the PCC (section 64 of the Measure).

6. The Diocesan Pastoral Committee (DPC) seeks the views of the 'interested parties' - the relevant incumbents, patrons, PCCs, archdeacons, rural deans, lay chairmen of deanery synods and local planning authorities. It must also notify the Council for the Care of Churches (CCC) and seek from it a 'report about the historic interest and architectural quality' of the church or churches, of 'other churches in the area', 'the historic interest and aesthetic qualities of [their] contents' and 'any special feature of any churchyard or burial ground attached to any of them'.
7. The CCC then asks for information by a form PM1B. Each church is visited by the CCC's Archaeology Officer to compile the report. In practice this involves both a survey of the building and discussion of the proposal with parochial and, often, diocesan representatives. Comments are also sought from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) in view of the CCC's role as central co-ordinator of DACs. Information on specific items, e.g. bells and brasses, is sought from acknowledged experts, and the CCC library and archives.
8. The draft report then comes for discussion to the CCC, where the Officer's assessment of the church's quality (as defined above) is discussed and may be revised.
9. The CCC's report is addressed in the first instance to the DPC. The measure stipulates that copies should be sent also to the Church Commissioners and to the Diocesan Board of Finance. Copies of the CCC reports, now public documents, are circulated to kindred bodies such as English Heritage, the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments,

the Council for British Archaeology and the Victoria and Albert Museum and, for specific categories of furnishing, the British Institute of Organ Studies and the Stained Glass Museum at Ely. Copies of individual reports are made available to the statutory amenity societies, and to other enquirers, on request.

10. At the same time as the CCC investigations, the management team of the future community centre will need to establish a real need for such centre in the area (probably through a survey), draw up a business plan, draw up plans for modifications to the building and set up charitable status.
11. On receipt of the CCC report and a report from the community centre trust the DPC may decide for a variety of reasons not to pursue the proposals; if it decides to proceed, they must be submitted to the bishop for approval.
12. If the bishop approves the recommendations he sends them the Church Commissioners in the form of a proposal and informs the DPC that he has done so.
13. The DPC then sends copies of the proposals to the interested parties so that they know this stage has been reached.
14. If not already investigated by the DPC, on receipt of the proposals, the Commissioners commission an investigation of the title of the property to ensure that there are no restrictions on the use of land or problems of access. The Commissioners also consult the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches (ABRC) for their advice both on the historic importance of the building and the specific plans and proposals for alternative use.¹⁵ In

¹⁵ The Advisory Board for Redundant

the light of the report on title and the advice from the ABRC, the Commissioners draw up the bishop's proposals into a legal form as a draft pastoral scheme which (and this is unusual) will also embodying the provisions of a redundancy scheme (see Section 47.1 of the Measure). The Commissioners need to be satisfied that the proposals for the future use of any part of the building declared redundant are "suitable".

15. The draft Pastoral Scheme is published for consultation with the interested parties and the public in general. Interested bodies include English Heritage, the statutory amenity societies and the local authority.

16. If there are objections, The Commissioners adjudicate. People may make oral representations or objections to the Commissioners Pastoral Committee and representatives from the relevant diocese may also make representations. The Commissioners must give reasons for their decisions. Before allowing a scheme to proceed the Commissioners will usually need to be satisfied that funding will be in place for the project and that it is likely to achieve planning permission and listed building consent (if required).

17. If the Commissioners allow a contested scheme to proceed, objectors can seek to appeal against the Commissioners' decision to the Privy Council.

18. The scheme can become law (subject to the process of any such appeal.) The building can be made redundant as a church and the bishop

Churches are the Commissioners' statutory advisors on the historic and archeological interest and architectural quality of redundant churches, their contents and landscape value. They advise the Commissioners on proposed alterations.

can license the community centre for public worship. It is necessary for ownership to change under this procedure - if it is for continued community and charitable use, with the intention that the building continue to be licensed for worship, this may be for a nominal sum eg £1.

Process for the uniting of PCCs

Joint PCCs, Group Councils and Team Councils are all means for formalising the consultation of parishes within a benefice. However if there is a desire to reduce the administrative burden of a benefice and to reduce the number of meetings and of PCC officers, (in particular treasurers) then uniting parishes so that there are fewer of them will make life simpler.¹⁶

This will require a scheme under the Pastoral Measure 1983.¹⁷ The Pastoral Measure 1983 is designed for use in changing the arrangements for the ministry in the church and covers such things as pastoral reorganisation eg creating new benefices.

The union of parishes is covered under section 17.1 of the measure. Each of the existing Parish Churches can retain their parish church status (section 27.1 of the measure) and as such would have two churchwardens each. The process is as follows:

1. Wide local consultation, prayer and discussion and consult with the area

¹⁶ It is possible to create District Church Councils (DCCs) and formally delegate powers to them from the PCC, but this possibility should be treated with cautions as it permanently establishes more levels of bureaucracy. It may be better for the PCC to informally create subcommittees or groups as needed - eg. For building/fabric, for particular villages or for one off projects.

¹⁷ A fully amended version of the Pastoral Measure can be downloaded from www.cofe.anglican.org/about/churchcommissioners/pastoral/legislation.

Archdeacon (not a formal part of the procedure).

2. PCCs pass resolutions for their union.

3. The Diocesan Pastoral Committee (DPC) seeks the views of the 'interested parties' eg. relevant incumbents, patrons, PCCs, archdeacons, rural deans and lay chairmen of deanery synods.

4. On receipt of the views of interested parties the DPC may decide for a variety of reasons not to pursue the proposals; if it decides to proceed, they must be submitted to the bishop for approval.

5. If the bishop approves the recommendations he sends them to the Church Commissioners in the form of a proposal and informs the DPC that he has done so.

6. The DPC then sends copies of the proposals to the interested parties so that they know that this stage had been reached.

7. The Commissioners draw up the bishop's proposals in to a legal form as a draft pastoral scheme. This is published for consultation to the interested parties.

8. If there are objections, The Commissioners adjudicate. People may make oral representations or objections to the Commissioners Pastoral Committee and representatives from the relevant diocese may also make representations. The Commissioners must give reasons for their decisions. (If the Commissioners allow a contested scheme to proceed, objectors can seek to appeal against the Commissioners' decision to the Privy Council.)

9. The scheme can become law (subject to the process of any such appeal.)