

GOVERNANCE SIMPLE, FRUITFUL & SUSTAINABLE

The Church of England seeks to be 'simpler, humbler, bolder'. On the Way invites us to plan for future fruitfulness and sustainability. This includes the sustainability of governance arrangements in terms of their effectiveness and the demands it places upon clergy and others. This paper outlines three ways in which parish governance could work: parishes are asked to consider which is most appropriate.



PARISH CHURCH COUNCIL

The principal function, or purpose, of the PCC is 'promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church.' Each PCC is a charity, responsible for all parish finance; it is formally the employer of any paid workers. The PCC has the right to be consulted about major changes to the forms of worship used in the parish and about the appointment of a new incumbent and any pastoral scheme affecting the parish.



DISTRICT CHURCH COUNCIL

In any parish where there are two or more churches or places of worship the annual meeting may make a scheme for the election of a DCC for any district in the parish in which a church or licensed building is situated.

DCCs may be delegated by the PCC the day to day running of the churches they represent but sit in subsidiarity to the one PCC which holds overall responsibility for governance and of the parish.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

PARISH

A parish is the basic territorial unit of the Church of England governed by one Parish Church Council (PCC). A parish may have one or more parish churches with churchwardens elected for each church in the parish.

BENEFICE

A benefice consists of a single parish or number of parishes under the care of an incumbent. A multi parish benefice refers to a benefice with a number of parishes under the care of an incumbent – there are a number of different governance arrangements, e.g. multiple PCCs on their own, multiple PCCs plus a Joint Council, or a PCC with District Church Council (DCC). A plurality of benefices refers to a number of benefices under the care of one incumbent.

GROUP MINISTRY

A Group Ministry is the coming together of three or more parishes in a 'Group' for the sake of Mission and Ministry across a distinct geographical area. The benefices within the Group retain their separate and distinct existence with their own PCCs but a Joint Council may be established with delegated responsibilities.



JOINT CHURCH COUNCIL

Parishes that belong to the same benefice, or to a benefice held in plurality, or are in a group ministry may establish and delegate responsibilities to a Joint Council. A JC has the same legal status as a PCC.

MISSION & PASTORAL PLANNING

ADVANTAGES OF ONE PARISH - ONE PCC

- **Vision** - creating common purpose and mission. With one parish, PCC representatives from across the churches have a common responsibility for growing and sharing vision and resources to enable mission and ministry to flourish across the new parish.
- **Appointments** - It is easier to recruit clergy to one parish, one PCC. In an increasingly 'competitive market' more than one PCC in a benefice can often deter candidates from applying.
- **Administration** - reducing duplication. One parish with one PCC addresses duplication and the increasing difficulties in finding and appointing church officers.

CREATING A SINGLE PARISH

- The simplest model for governance is one PCC whether in one benefice or a multi parish benefice.
- In a multi-parish benefice a Pastoral Scheme may unite several parishes to become a single parish with one PCC.
- Churches in such a single parish could all remain Parish Churches with churchwardens and with specific committees dealing with the care of the individual churches.
- Though restricted and specific funds could remain with each Parish Church, the one PCC would hold financial responsibility.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

The On the Way Advisors will help you think and pray about different governance models. Talk with them if you have questions or want to find out more about these models or the practical implications.

