

To: The Revd Carrie Thompson – Vicar – Forton
Mrs Bev Whitton – Secretary – Forton
The Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Patronage – Patron – Forton
The Venerable Gavin Collins – Archdeacon of the Meon
The Revd Karen Mitchell – Area Dean – Gosport Deanery
The Revd Dr Paul Chamberlain – Assistant Area Dean – Gosport Deanery
Mr Chris Smart – Deanery Synod Lay Chairman – Gosport Deanery
Gosport Borough Planning Department
Local Parish Council
Councillor Clive Foster-Reed – Forton Ward
Councillor Mrs Angela Prickett – Forton Ward

1 February 2019

Re: PROPOSED PASTORAL REORGANISATION

Dear all,

On Monday 28 January, the Bishop's Council met and considered the draft proposals and recommended that they be sent out for formal consultation. This decision had been delayed from the Bishop's Council meeting in December to enable its members to read through the large volume of emails, letters and petitions.

The draft proposals

The draft proposals before you are the basic legal building blocks which will be the foundation for the future ministry in your area and as such do not contain all of the detail of what that will look like in your area.

The aim of the proposals is to free people from the burdens of finances, administration and buildings so that rather than solely maintaining the existing church they will also be able to support new projects, opportunities and communities by:

- Undertaking pastoral reorganisation to create mission units consisting of single benefices, with united leadership, ministry teams, finance, governance, and administration; some local decision making will be delegated to individual congregations. The draft Proposals, now circulated for consultation, are by necessity restricted to this element of the reorganisation. This new structure would enable the other developments:
- Creating new ministry structures, including at least an ordained stipendiary team leader, a church planting minister, operations support, and specialist ministers to focus on children/young families outreach and social engagement;

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- Planting a new congregation or congregations with a church planting team gathered from inside and outside of the new parish;
- Resourcing existing congregations to promote outreach and growth alongside good teaching and pastoral care;
- Deploying pioneer ministers to engage with points of social need, such as food banks and debt advice centres, and alongside our own Good Neighbours groups, with an emphasis on addressing life issues in the context of whole-life discipleship.

A new diocesan intern scheme will be used to enhance elements of the new ministry structures: this will encourage interns, including as many as possible from the local area, to gain experience themselves in church planting, mission, and ministry in a variety of contexts while developing their own vocations. This builds on learning from the Discovery Gap Year and the Harbour Residency Year.

Development of social enterprise opportunities suitable for the needs of the local areas and other income generation activities will be explored with the communities.

Informal consultation

The informal consultation began in mid-October 2018 with the public consultation meetings in the three deaneries of Gosport, Havant and the Isle of Wight. Subsequently there was a series of meetings between each PCC and members of the Bishop's staff and diocesan team. These meetings proved invaluable in shaping the current form of the draft proposals before you for consideration and the Bishop's Council thanks you all for your time, energy and commitment in working through this.

Following the informal consultation, the Bishop's Council has decided not to include the benefices of Arreton and Newchurch in the proposed pastoral reorganisation and so neither benefice will be included in the consultation process going forward. Sincere thanks are extended to The Revd Janice O'Shaughnessy and both PCCs.

Formal consultation

Enclosed with this letter is the formal consultation letter under section 6 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 inviting your views on the draft proposals that can be sent to me at dmpc@portsmouth.anglican.org to reach me by Friday 29 March 2019.

What happens next

On Wednesday 3 April 2019 the draft proposals will be presented to the Bishop's Council for decision on whether to recommend them to the Bishop; if the Bishop approves them, either with or without amendments, he will sign the proposals and arrange for them to be sent to the Church Commissioners' Pastoral Division.

The Church Commissioners would then draft and publish a draft scheme (the legal document which would give effect to the proposals) in due course. They would send copies of the draft scheme to all the interested parties with notice that written representations may be made to the Commissioners by a specified date (not less than 28 days) and arrange for “church door” notices to be displayed and notices read out at services. Any representations would be considered by the Church Commissioners’ Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee. This would probably be at their 17 July or 4 September 2019 meeting (depending on workloads and other agenda items). The Commissioners would decide whether the Scheme should be made – this could be either as drafted or with amendments proposed by them in light of the representations (any such amendments would have to be agreed by the Bishop and might be subject to further consultation).

If the proposed scheme is made we would expect it to come into effect some time in first half of 2020 as there is a six-month period between the scheme being made and coming into effect in an instance like this where it would have the effect of dispossessing office holders from their current offices without itself appointing them to new offices.

In the meantime

It is anticipated that there will be a number of evenings (dates to be arranged) when PCCs will be able to meet with representatives of the Bishop’s Council, in the same way as in the informal consultation, to give their views on the draft proposals.

However, in parallel to this process but separate from it, it has been suggested that it may be helpful for the PCCs to come together to look at the shape of the potential new ministry team?, to see what this might look like, should the draft proposals result in any Scheme being made and taking effect. We will be in touch with you to see if you would find this helpful.

Thank you again for all of your emails, responses, support and participation so far. I look forward to working with you all in the weeks and months ahead.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Hollingsworth', written in a cursive style.

Jenny Hollingsworth
Deputy Diocesan Secretary
Secretary to Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee