

Summary update from the PCC

As your PCC, we have the following news to share:

- At the Section 11 Meeting held on the 12 March 2024 at 7:30pm, the PCC voted to rescind the resolution¹ under the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Priests and Bishops.
- The PCC voted as follows (the motion was FOR or AGAINST the resolution):
14 to rescind (AGAINST), 5 to retain (FOR), 1 abstention and 1 member not present at the Section 11 meeting.

What this means for the parish

- For those in the parish holding strong theological convictions about the sacraments regarding women as priests, this result is deeply upsetting and impacts their spiritual journey with our Lord in this parish. Please pray for all members of our parish affected by the PCC decision to rescind the resolution.
- Rescinding the resolution means the Parish automatically leaves membership of The Society and Forward in Faith as these organisations are only for parishes with a Resolution. It also means our Parish can open Parish priest applications to male and female Church of England priests.
- The parish will now have oversight from the Bishop of Oxford rather than the Bishop of Oswestry.

Next steps

1. The PCC has appointed Anna Page and David Riding to be its lay representatives on the appointments process.
2. The PCC decided to ask for a statement from the acting area Dean to be included in the Parish Profile document.
3. Guided by advice from Revd Asa Humphreys, Parish Development Adviser for Buckingham, a working group of the PCC is continuing the work started last year to pull together the Parish Profile, the role description, person specification and advertisement for a new Parish priest. The group is Gwen Yates, Anne de Broise, Anna Page, David Riding, Fiona Collins, Marilyn Bazeley and Jane Hardy.
4. The PCC will ask the Bishop of Oxford (the patron) to advertise the post once the Parish Profile, role description, person specification and advertisement documents are ready. This means placing the advertisement in The Church Times. It will also be placed on the Parish website.
5. The application, short-listing, interview and appointment process will be conducted according to the Church of England's guidance on the appointment of clergy, which is available online at <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/clergy-handbook/affirmation-accountability-and-development/>.

¹ The resolution wording: "For the sake of the unity of our Parish, this PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests."

Your role as a member of the parish

It is important to recognise that whilst many in the congregations may view the rescinding of the Resolution as the means by which, irrespective of gender, the best person to lead our Parish forward in Mission and Worship can be appointed; those who believe in the male only historic apostolic succession² as part of their conviction of faith will be profoundly hurt by the vote outcome.

Those deeply affected by this outcome can obtain pastoral and spiritual care from Fr Gary Ecclestone of St James Hanslope 07960027424 healthychurches@seeofoswestry.org.uk and/or Fr Victor Bullock of St Martins Fenny Stratford 01908 372825.

Following the vote to rescind the resolution, Fr Tunji Adebisi is leaving the Parish. He plans to write a letter to explain his reasons which will be shared with the parish once it is received. Thank you Fr Tunji for all you have done for the parish, especially during the Interregnum.

At the Section 11 meeting the PCC was reminded of advice from Reverend Cassa³ that female clergy will not go where their calling is not recognised by some of the congregation, therefore it is unlikely the next Parish Priest to be appointed will be a woman. Likewise, in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, it is unlikely that the next priest will have been ordained by a female Bishop. Our parish is likely to remain Anglo-Catholic.

Please continue to pray for the PCC and the whole Parish as we seek the person whom God is calling to be our new Parish Priest.

² **Historic Apostolic Succession:** the ordination of priests by bishops in a continuous succession from the twelve apostles. For those who do not support the ordination of women, Historic Apostolic Succession means a continuous succession of male priests only. This is about the uninterrupted transmission of spiritual authority from the apostles and upholding the catholic order and the catholic doctrine of the sacraments, in particular the threefold ministry in historic succession. It is about the deep spiritual need for traditional Anglo-Catholicism and promoting and maintaining catholic teaching within the Church of England

See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_succession for information about Apostolic succession.

³ Revd Cassa Messervy appointed by the Archdeacon of Buckingham, Guy Elsmore to facilitate and advise the PCC.