

Coming into operation of this Scheme

4 If upon the date on which this Scheme is made no person other than the person referred to in clause 2(3) hereof holds an ecclesiastical office under Common Tenure which will be terminated by this Scheme and is in receipt of a stipend and/or other emoluments of office, including accommodation, this Scheme shall come into operation on the first day of the month following the said date; but if on the said date any person other than the person referred to in clause 2(3) hereof holds such an office this Scheme shall come into effect six months thereafter or on such earlier date on which all such offices have been vacated.

In witness whereof the Church Commissioners have caused their Common Seal to be hereunto affixed.

SIGNED by the Right Reverend Steven,)
)
Bishop of Oxford.)

Executed as a Deed by the affixing of)
)
the Common Seal of the Church)
)
Commissioners in the presence of:-)

AUTHENTICATING OFFICER

Notes by the Diocesan office (not forming part of the draft Scheme)

The rationale behind the diocesan proposals is as follows:

There has been a troubled relationship between the parishes of Theale and Englefield which goes back 40 years. In 1981 a memorandum was drawn up between the then Bishop of Reading and Sir William Benyon MP to detail the legal situation and working arrangements required of a new joint benefice brought into being by Pastoral Scheme. The expectation then was that although legally the incumbent of the benefice (living in Theale) was responsible for Englefield, the day-to-day running of Englefield was entrusted to a resident priest. Full cooperation between the priests and parishes was expected and was encouraged.

Twenty years later in 2001, in the light of experience, a further memorandum was written by a new Bishop of Reading emphasising that in order for such an unusual arrangement to work well, openness, trust and good personal and professional relationships between the two parishes and their clergy was vital. Despite the two memoranda, the lack of clarity inherent in these arrangements has proved to be unhelpful. Relationships over the 40 years have not been easy and precious time and energy has been expended in resolving ongoing disputes and tension; the gospel has not been well served.

Since good relationships cannot be imposed, the Bishop considers that it is time to consider a legal solution which will enable both parishes to flourish. In the light of experience the current Bishop is convinced that the separation of the parishes of Theale and Englefield, and the creation of two new autonomous pastoral units is the only solution which will lead to the flourishing of both parishes.

The proposed benefice of Englefield (comprising the parish of Englefield), entirely responsible for its own affairs, will be able to concentrate on being a gathered church offering pastoral care and worship for people in Englefield and beyond.

The proposed new benefice of Theale (comprising the parish of Theale), will continue to develop and build on its own local mission opportunities and initiatives - family church, mothers and toddlers group, work in two schools, ecumenical Alpha and so on. These opportunities, and impressive progress in recent years, have already been recognised by the deanery.

Both the deanery and the diocese recognise the good missional work which the new benefice of Theale is engaged in, and are committed to supporting it through the continued provision of full-time ministry. A financial plan has been agreed between the three parties and it is projected that Theale will reach financial sustainability over a period of 10 years.

It is intended that the Revd Nicholas Wynne-Jones, currently Assistant Curate in the benefice of Theale and Englefield, will be appointed Assistant Curate of the new benefice of Englefield and continue to live in St Mark's House, a property owned by the patron. Because he is over 70, he cannot be made incumbent and so the Bishop will consult on the immediate suspension of presentation to the proposed benefice of Englefield.

Publication of this draft Scheme has been approved by the Church Commissioners but does not mean that they have taken a view on the merits of the diocesan case.

If they receive representations against the draft Scheme, the Commissioners will send all representations, both for and against, to the Bishop whose views will be sought. Individual representors will then receive copies of the Commissioners' correspondence with the Bishop (including copies of all the representations) and they may comment further in writing to the Commissioners in light of the diocesan response if they so wish.

If there are no representations against the draft Scheme, the Commissioners will make the Scheme and arrange for it to be brought into effect.

Coming into effect clause

Under the provision of s39(3) of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 it is mandatory for a Pastoral Scheme which would have the effect of causing any ecclesiastical office held under Common Tenure the holder of which is in receipt of a stipend and/or accommodation to cease to exist to include the provision in clause 4 delaying the coming into effect of the Scheme for up to six months after it is made. This is to give such an office holder who would be dispossessed an opportunity to find another post before the Scheme takes effect, and if not appointed to another office he or she may become eligible for compensation. For the avoidance of doubt this provision is included in all cases where the possibility of such dispossession could arise but the six month delay provision will only become operative if someone in receipt of a stipend and/or accommodation, other than such a person who is named in the Scheme as the first holder of a new office, is actually in post on the day the Scheme is made. Generally any such persons will agree to resign and be relicensed to the new benefice in order to bring the Scheme into effect without delay. In this case, it is the Bishop's intention, as stated above, to license the Revd Nicholas Wynne-Jones to serve in the proposed new benefice of Englefield, and the Reverend Peter Templeman to serve in the new benefice of Theale.

Churches etc

This Scheme does not alter the existing status of any of the churches, chapels of ease or licensed places of worship in the affected parishes.