



# Astwell Benefice of Churches

## Scheme for a Joint PCC under Rule M37

*The Astwell Benefice has been operating as a United Benefice on a trial basis for nearly four years, and this scheme describes the powers and organisation requested for the Joint PCC.*

### **How the Astwell Benefice wishes to operate as a United Benefice**

The United Benefice structure allows strategic decision making to be done centrally for the whole Benefice, whilst leaving control of maintenance and care of the individual churches to be done locally, along with local control of finances, fundraising and social event planning.

### **Powers to transfer to the Joint PCC**

1. Management of Parish Share arrangements: discussions as to how this will work will be completed before the end of 2021.
2. Benefice Administration arrangements including paying for Administration support and the costs of the Incumbent.
3. Worship provision across the Parishes
4. Mission planning across the Parishes
5. Social and fundraising to meet Benefice costs
6. Formal approval of Faculty applications prepared by the Churchwardens/BRICCs

### **Powers remaining with the local Parishes**

1. Buildings /Churchyards
2. Finances – to maintain buildings and pay portion of parish share
3. Local Charitable trusts
4. Local fundraising

### **The proposed structure is as follows:**

#### **Benefice Parochial Church Council (BPCC)**

**Membership:** Each parish will appoint 2 representatives to the BPCC each year, The Rector, Readers, Benefice Secretary, Benefice Finance Officer and Benefice Safeguarding Officer are also members. The BPCC is chaired by the Rector, or in their absence by the Lay Chair.

**Role:** The BPCC discusses and decides upon mission and worship strategy for the Benefice, manages the Benefice Admin, Benefice Finances, Safeguarding, Pastoral care across the Benefice and Benefice social and fundraising events. Several Committees report back to the BPCC, as do the local Parish groups (BRICCS)

### **Sub Committees reporting to the BPCC are:**

**Worship** – representatives from each Parish attend and decide jointly upon worship / services for each church. The Committee is chaired by the Rector.

**Finance** – attended by the Treasurers from each Parish and chaired by the Benefice Treasurer.

**Pastoral care** – to provide oversight of pastoral work in each village.

**Social and Fundraising** – they have the remit to raise money to pay for the Benefice expenses – any surplus goes towards the Benefice Share.

**Parish BRICCs** – are the local Parish Church Councils, who have the role of maintaining the fabric of the church, raising money to maintain the church and to contribute to the Benefice Share (the money paid to the Diocese for the cost of employing a Rector), planning and running local social and fundraising events and also keeping the Rector and Pastoral Ctte aware of local pastoral needs.

***All members of the BPCC, Committees and BRICCs are re-elected on an annual basis at the Parish level – at annual Vestry Meetings.***

### **Provision for a Parish to leave the scheme**

To leave the scheme, a Parish must hold a vote in an open meeting and obtain two thirds majority in favour of leaving.

The minuted decision will be presented to the Benefice PCC at a quorate meeting. Where the decision will be recorded, and a minute made recording transfer of all responsibilities taken on by the BPPC back to the Parish.

## **Benefits of operating as a United Benefice**

### **For the life of the Churches in the Benefice**

- 1 It is easier with one united Benefice PCC and associated groups to discuss and agree a common vision for God's mission in the Benefice.
- 2 Sharing of ideas and resources between parishes is easier.
- 3 Reduced admin work for the Incumbent releases more resource for:
  - Mission and Ministry essential to enable growth in faith and membership.
  - Meeting parishioners / pastoral work
  - involvement locally in schools, coffee mornings etc.

### **Additional Advantages for the Incumbent:**

- 1 Meeting all the church leaders together.
- 2 Leaving the buildings to the local people to resolve.
- 3 Only 4 PCC meetings a year that are productive (no buildings taking all night)
- 4 Only one APCM

### **For the local Church**

- 1 Greater autonomy to sort out issues.
- 2 Sole control of finances
- 3 Reduced cost to the parish of benefice and parish share.
- 4 Support from other churches – sharing knowledge and in some cases finances.
- 5 Benefice events, lightening the load of local fund raising.