

Diocesan Synod

Paper Reference	9.2
Title	The Parsonages Board Scheme
Meeting and Date	Diocesan Synod 17 February 2024
Paper submitted by	Archdeacon of Dorset, Director Asset and Finance Management
Background	<p>Under our current structures and a Measure passed by Synod in December 1992, The Bishop's Council is the Diocesan Parsonages Board and its functions and powers have been delegated to Archdeaconry Property Committees.</p> <p>The Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) is charged by the Bishop's Council with managing all our resources, but currently has no legal say in the management of parsonages, yet these properties form the larger part of our Balance Sheet.</p> <p>Legally double delegation is not permissible, so Bishop's Council as the Parsonages Board cannot delegate to FRC which in turn would delegate to the Archdeaconry Property Committees.</p> <p>Conversations have taken place for the last 18 months exploring alternative ways of working.</p> <p>Discussion in each of the Archdeaconry Property Committees has rightly emphasised the important role of local perspectives and voices in informing decision making. For the last 18 months there has also been an informal diocesan wide property group with representation from each of the four Archdeaconries taking stock of current issues as well as informing sale/buy decisions in a coherent way for the diocese and DBF as a whole.</p>

	Following this informal exploration and conversation and as part of our update of governance and desire to be simpler, humbler and bolder the Bishop’s Council are now proposing a more formal change in ways of working.
What is required of this meeting? Note/Receive/Decision/Action	The motion proposed: “This Synod approves the revised Parsonages Board Scheme.”

Rationale for change, recommended by Bishop’s Council

- We seek to work in a way that is both locally owned and relevant to mission and ministry whilst part of a common diocesan approach and coherent financial management.
- With our current financial pressures and the imperative to upgrade our housing stock to implement Net Zero, it is desirable that the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) can act more strategically in the management of our properties, whilst retaining local input in decision making.
- It is equally desirable that Bishop’s Council as Trustees and Directors of the DBF retain the final say in matters of property as part of an integrated approach to ministry and finance and therefore should remain as the Parsonages Board.

The proposal

The proposed Scheme delegates the powers of the Parsonage Board to FRC which in turn would be advised by Area Property Groups.

The Area Property Groups would be formed by merging the existing Sarum and Wilts Archdeaconry Committees into a Wilts Area Group and the Dorset and Sherborne Archdeaconry Committees into a Dorset Area Group.

The effect of this would be:

1. The FRC would have complete oversight of all finance and resource issues for the Diocese and so be able to act more strategically and be more agile in a rapidly changing world.
2. Local knowledge and input are retained in a meaningful way.
3. The FRC would be able to ensure scarce resources are shared equitably across the Diocese.

Motion:

“This Synod approves the revised Parsonages Board Scheme.”

SCHEME

Designation of the Diocesan Board of Finance as the Parsonages Board

Section 1 and section 30(2) of the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972

In this Scheme:

- “The Measure” means the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972;
- “The Board” means the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance in the exercise of its functions under the Measure;
- “The Diocese” means the Diocese of Salisbury;
- “The committee” means the committee constituted and referred to in the Schedule to this Scheme;
- unless the context otherwise requires, expressions defined under Section 31 of the Measure or the Measure generally shall have the meanings given in the Measure.

1. Designation of Parsonages Board

1.1. The Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance is hereby designated as the Parsonages Board for the Diocese of Salisbury for the purposes of the furtherance of the work of the Church of England by the exercise of its functions under the Measure.

2. Delegation of Board's Functions

2.1. Save for the functions reserved to the Board by paragraph 2.2, the functions of the Board under the Measure shall be delegated to a committee of the Board as constituted and referred to in the Schedule to this Scheme.

2.2. The Board reserves to itself the matters set out in:

- paragraph 4 (Annual Estimates of Expenditure and Presentation of Annual Reports & Accounts); and,
- paragraph 6 (Regulations in relation to Inspections, Reports and Repairs).

3. Appointment of Diocesan Surveyors

3.1. The Board shall appoint such persons as it considers fit to act as surveyors for the purposes of the Measure (hereinafter referred to as "Diocesan Surveyors") and the

number, remuneration and terms of service of such Diocesan Surveyors shall be determined from time to time by the Board.

4. Annual Estimates of Expenditure and Presentation of Annual Reports & Accounts

4.1. The Board shall submit to the Diocesan Synod annual estimates of the expenditure of the Board for the ensuing year together with proposals for meeting that expenditure.

4.2. The Board shall present an annual report and annual accounts to the Diocesan Synod.

5. Extensions of the functions of the Board

5.1. The Board may execute works of interior decoration of parsonage houses by agreement with the Incumbent.

5.2. The Board may execute works of improvement, demolition or erection in pursuance of one or more of the powers under sections 1, 2 and 4 of the Church Property Measure 2018, by agreement with the persons on whom those powers are conferred.

5.3. The Board may request a Diocesan Surveyor to inspect any building in the Diocese used as a residence by any clergyperson or lay worker of the Church of England serving in the Diocese and to make a report to the Board on such inspection.

5.4. The Board may execute works of repair, interior decoration, improvement, demolition or erection of any buildings in the Diocese held for charitable purposes connected with the Church of England, by agreement with the persons having the management or control of such building.

5.5. All expenditure of the Board under this Scheme, except expenditure defrayed out of a specific trust fund, shall be defrayed out of any fund or funds capable of being applied for the purposes in question.

5.6. In this paragraph 5, references to parsonage houses and to buildings used or held for certain purposes shall include references, where appropriate, to buildings intended to be used as parsonage houses or to be used or held for those purposes.

6. Regulations in relation to Inspections, Reports and Repairs

6.1. The Board may at any time publish Regulations concerning:

- a) Inspections of buildings of a benefice by Diocesan Surveyors and the making of reports following on such inspections;
- b) The execution of repairs to buildings of a benefice, including the supervision thereof by Diocesan Surveyors and otherwise and any other matters required for securing efficiency and economy in such execution.

7. Operative Date of Scheme

7.1. The provisions of this Scheme shall come into operation on the day next following the making of the Scheme by the Diocesan Synod.

This Scheme is made by the Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Salisbury at a meeting held on the day of 2024.

This Scheme replaces the Scheme approved by the Church Commissioners on the 10th day of December 1992.

In witness whereof it has been signed by the Bishop of Salisbury on behalf of the Diocesan Synod.

The Bishop of Salisbury:

SCHEDULE

**CONSTITUTION & PROCEDURE OF COMMITTEE
TO EXERCISE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD**

A. The functions delegated by paragraph 2 of this Scheme are delegated to the Finance and Resources Committee ("the committee"), such committee adequately representing the clergy and laity as provided under the Measure. The committee may include persons other than members of the Board as provided under the Measure.

Membership of the Committee

- B. The membership of the committee shall be:
- a) The Chair of the Board, who shall also act as Chair of the committee;
 - b) The Vice Chair of the Board, who shall also act as Vice Chair of the committee;
 - c) Up to eight persons appointed by the Board in accordance with paragraphs C and D of this Schedule;
 - d) Up to two persons co-opted by the committee in accordance with paragraph E of this Schedule.
- C. The Board shall appoint persons to the committee as soon as practicable after the election of a new Diocesan Synod and the election of a new Bishop's Council and Standing Committee.
- D. The Board shall appoint persons in such a way that:--
- a) at least one person holding the office of Archdeacon in the Diocese is appointed;
 - b) at least one other person who is a member of Bishop's Council is appointed;
 - c) at least one person who is the spouse or partner of a Clerk in Holy Orders;
 - d) that the membership of the committee provides adequate representation from the archdeaconries of Sarum and Wilts (taken together) and the archdeaconries of Sherborne and Dorset (taken together);
 - e) that the membership of the committee provides adequate representation of urban and rural contexts;
 - f) that (whilst ensuring there is adequate representation of the laity and the clergy) the majority of members of the committee are lay.
- E. The committee may co-opt up to two additional members, provided that:-
- a) the Nominations Committee of the Diocese has been consulted about and has indicated its approval of the proposed candidate or candidates; or,
 - b) the Board has indicated its approval of the proposed candidate or candidates.
- F. Persons appointed to or co-opted on to the committee shall serve on the committee until they resign, or until the appointment of their successor by the Board.

- G. The Board may fill casual vacancies on the committee at any time, complying with the requirements of paragraph D of this Schedule. Persons appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall serve on the committee until they resign, or until the appointment of their successor by the Board.
- H. No person shall serve on the committee for a continuous period of more than nine years.

Procedure of the committee

- I. The Board may provide for the procedure of the committee, including the frequency of meetings, the quorum for meetings, the chairing of meetings, voting procedures, the appointment of a secretary to the committee, the production of agendas and minutes, and the providing of notice of meetings.
- J. The committee may authorise the Diocesan Secretary to authorise expenditure for essential repairs to any building covered by this Scheme up to a maximum set by the committee from time to time, and the Diocesan Secretary shall report to the next meeting of the committee when this power has been exercised.
- K. Minutes of meetings of the committee shall be sent to the Secretary of the Board.
- L. The committee may determine its own procedure in any matter not provided for in this Schedule or by the Board under paragraph I.

Section 2 – The Role of Area Property Groups

- Review of Quinquennial Inspections; Once these are restored to a regular cycle of planned maintenance there is time for these reports to be considered by the Committee. If there is a lot of work the issue of whether it is the right house can be discussed.
- Review and prioritisation of Capital works; The regular cycle of planned maintenance (see above) will inform when major items like kitchens are coming up for renewal. Local committees can review these and rank them in order of priority. These 'bids' can be moderated by the FRC acting with the powers of the Parsonages Board

and the projects given the go ahead in any year determined by the available budget for capital works.

- Participate in a strategic review of the housing stock to make recommendations about their suitability for retention & letting or disposal & replacement so that when houses become vacant, we can act quickly.
- In the event of a difference of opinion about a house between the occupant and the Property Dept (e.g. about the state it is being left in), the Archdeacon and a Lay member would be called upon to consider the issues.
- Be consulted in the first instance about any sensitivities around proposed sales of glebe land.
- Be consulted at all stages over plans for the development of sites identified as having 'development potential'.