**PCC Guidance for Churches with a Resolution**

**on Women and Men’s Ministry**

The Church of England passed legislation in 2014 enabling all orders of ministry to be open for both men and women. As part of the package of proposals of which the legislation was part, the House of Bishops agreed a Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests designed to

sustain the diversity of the Church of England and the mutual flourishing of its constituent parts. The Declaration embodies the Five Guiding Principles (cf Appendix below) which have been endorsed by the General Synod.

The Declaration acknowledges that some PCCs may wish to pass a resolution to take advantage of arrangements available to those who, on grounds of theological conviction are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests.

Two primary documents setting out the details of the agreement are as follows:

1. [Women in the Episcopate GSMisc 1076](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/GS%20Misc%201076%20Women%20in%20the%20Episcopate.pdf)
2. [House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests – Guidance note from the House GSMisc 1077](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/GS%20Misc%201077%20House%20of%20Bishops%20Declaration%20on%20the%20Ministry%20of%20Bishops%20and%20Priests%20-%20Guidance%20note%20from%20the%20House.pdf)

In both documents you can find the details on how to go about a parish consultation, regular review of resolutions and the valid reasons for seeking alternative episcopal oversight. Please follow this guidance, and please note that not all guidance and advice booklets published by third parties fully comply with the agreement which was part of the legislative package.

**CHECKLIST**

**Has your PCC passed a Resolution?**

If the answer is ‘YES’, practice transparency, in the interest of mutuality and trust. People coming to your church and residents of your parish ought to know what to expect and how this may affect them.

**How should we communicate this?**

Include the information on your website and in the relevant ‘About’ section of your social media, as well as in any welcome packs, leaflets or information provided to newcomers.

**What information should we include?**

Why not begin by answering these three basic questions:

a) Which Resolution(s) have you passed?

Make an appropriate statement about the existence and purpose of a PCC resolution(s). The statement needs to be simply and clearly worded, in a way comprehensible to parishioners, regardless of their level of knowledge about theological convictions on gender. For example, make it clear that your Church is not able to receive the ministry of a female bishop for theological reasons.

b) What expectations should parishioners have for the ministry of women?

Clearly explain how the resolution determines the ministry and life of the church. A woman may not lead a service or preach, for example. A link to a more detailed PDF statement of the theological conviction which underlies the resolution may also be helpful.

c) When will the next review take place?

Under paragraph 21 of the Declaration, a PCC that has passed a resolution is expected to review it from time to time, especially when a vacancy arises in the benefice. Your website should give the date when the resolution was passed and information about when the next parish consultation and PCC review of the resolution will take place.

**Is there support?**

The Diocesan Adviser for Women’s Ministry is happy to assist a PCC with the process and facilitate members of the wider church community to submit views before any meeting at which a resolution is to be considered. Under paragraph 19 of the Declaration a resolution should be passed at a meeting of which the secretary of the PCC has given members at least four weeks’ notice of the place and time of the meeting and of the motion to be considered. This provides an opportunity for further study and discussion on the theological reasons across the parish.

**APPENDIX**

**The Five Guiding Principles**

The Five Guiding Principles, first commended by the House of Bishops in 2013, need to be read one with the other and held together in tension, rather than being applied selectively:

1. Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;
2. Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;
3. Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;
4. Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and
5. Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.

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Thoughts on the location within the Diocesan Website:

1. In >Your Church Role > PCC Secretaries and Role Holders >Further PCC Support Resources > [Add: PCC Resolutions on Women's and Men's Ministry]

2. In >Parish Support >Quick Links to Resources > [Add: PCC Resolutions on Women's and Men's Ministry]