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Church Society Trust holds patronage rights on behalf of Church Society which is a voluntary association of members of the Church of England.

Church Society exists to uphold biblical teaching and to promote and defend the character of the Church of England as a reformed and national Church. The Society is strongly committed to the supreme and final authority of the Bible as God's Word written.

Further information about Church Society and many other resources can be found on our website:

www.churchsociety.org

Information about the work of Church Society Trust can also be reached through:
www.churchsocietytrust.org.uk

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Clergy Appointments

Appointing an Incumbent under joint patronage



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There is a lot of jargon associated with clergy appointments some of which is explained in our leaflet "Clergy Appointments - An Overview".

This leaflet deals the appointment of clergy to a situation in which they are to be Incumbent in which patronage is held jointly. One form of joint patronage is a Team ministry in which a patronage board is always established and normally the Diocesan Bishop is the chairman with a casting vote. In other instances in which patronage is held jointly there will be no board but patrons will probably operate as a board, however there are no hard and fast rules, so the particular way of working depends upon the patrons concerned. Sometimes patronage is exercised by turns, including all benefices where the crown or Lord Chancellor is one amongst multiple patrons. If a patron has the turn exclusively then the appointment operates as a sole patronage. However, it is possible to have turns where patronage is shared.

If a Benefice is suspended, or where patronage is held solely, please refer to other leaflets.

Some Dioceses recommend that appointments be conducted in a specific way. However neither the old legislation nor the newer Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure lay down a detailed process merely certain fixed points. The decision about process is therefore in the hands of the Patrons, within the limits of the legislation, after consultation with the PCC and possibly the Bishop.

Players and Parts

An Incumbent can be a Rector, Vicar or Team Rector. The appointment of Team Vicars depend upon the details agreed in the scheme which created the Team Ministry.

There are four steps which are taken in an appointment.

- The Parochial Church Council(s) specify the post and the person they are seeking.
- The Patrons nominate with a view to later presenting a candidate.

The patrons will have agreed who will handle the paperwork and how short-listing will be done. There are many possibilities but out of the process at most 3 or 4 candidates will be invited for interview.

Precisely how the interview day is carried out depends upon negotiation but as there are several candidates to see it is possible that an overnight stay will be required particularly for those travelling from afar. Much the same observations as to the visit apply as were outlined under "headhunting" above regarding wives, who to meet and so on.

It is not usual in this situation the interview to be conducted by a panel including the parish reps, the patrons, and the Bishop or his representative. This can make for a large interview panel and therefore it is not unusual for the panel to divide and each interview separately comparing notes at the end. Obviously everyone has to play their part in the appointment and the patrons must be willing to present and the Bishop must not have found cause to refuse to institute. However, the Parish reps must be careful to remember that they must accept and should not allow themselves to be pushed into an appointment they are unhappy with, or conversely to exclude someone they consider suitable. Interviews must be conducted in a way that is fair and in which there is no discrimination through the questions asked.

If the interview involves the patron, reps and Bishop then it is likely that having made a decision on the day that will be the final decision, although as before the Bishop will want to take references etc. Ideally, of course there needs to be unanimity and the patron must be prepared to nominate, the parish reps must be prepared to accept and the Bishop must be prepared to institute.

institution will take place. The new Incumbent must be given a Statement of Particular (SOP) either before taking up post or within a month of starting. The SOP will be quite general and apart from titles and names should be the same as published in the Diocesan Handbook. The service is part of the appointment process in which the various steps previously taken are publicly demonstrated as the Patron presents, the parishioners welcome and the Bishop institutes. If there was a Job Description this should be reviewed within 6 months.

Competitive Interviews

We have outlined above the traditional process which we have described as “headhunting” but in recent years it has become much more common to advertise and hold a competitive interview. Because the legislation assumes the traditional approach there is far less clarity and much more variety in how the competitive interview approach works in practice and although we have outlined the main way below there are countless variations. Because there is more than one patron involved it is likely that there will be different views about how the process should be handled and this must be resolved early on.

The PCC will have requested advertising and the Patrons will agree with the PCC the form of advert to be used. It is expected that the PCC in requesting to advertise are also agreeing to pay! A decision will also need to be made on where to advertise. It is customary to advertise in one or both of the two main Church of England newspapers but other papers, such as Evangelicals Now, are also used. The Trust will put the advert on its own website, circulate it through the Church Society e-mail service and bring it to the attention of various clergy looking for a move. The Diocese will probably also put the advert on their website and in the Diocesan mailing and normally adverts also go to the Clergy Appointments Advisor who now mainly uses a website. The days in which some patrons only advertised in Horse and Hounds are not quite gone, but it is not unusual for adverts also to be placed in more specific publications.

- The Parish Representatives decide whether to accept the nominated candidate.
- The Bishop agrees to institute the incumbent, unless there are good grounds for not doing so.

If the Bishop is one of the patrons, which is always the case for Team ministries, then they are involved at more than one stage and some conflation of the steps may take place.

Whilst this is the process in outline, it can be much more complicated in practice.

Church Society Trust as one of your patrons

Church Society Trust is one of several large evangelical patronage societies who acquired their rights of patronage by various means in order to ensure the continuance of evangelical ministry knowing that at times in the past, and even sometimes today, there has been much hostility to such ministry in the wider Church. The Trust holds patronage jointly usually because of the amalgamation of benefices or the creation of Team ministries. Situations will vary from those where The Trust is one of two patrons, possibly even having a majority of votes in an appointment, to those in which the Trust has one on a large board of patronage.

The business of the Church Society Trust is conducted by seven Directors who are appointed from amongst the members of the Trust by the Council of Church Society. The Directors meet ten or eleven times a year to conduct their business as well as visits to parishes, interviews, discussions with candidates and many informal contacts.

The Directors are assisted by the staff of Church Society including the General Secretary who also acts as Secretary to the Trust and himself visits Trust parishes. The Secretary and Directors are always pleased to receive invitations to preach or to meet with PCCs or clergy.

Many members of Church Society pray regularly for all the churches for which the Trust has patronage responsibilities. About once every 9 months the Society writes to parishes to ask for items to include in our prayer diary. In addition literature is regularly sent to clergy in the parishes where this is welcomed.

Starting the process

A vacancy can occur because someone moves to another post, retires, resigns, or is removed from office by due process, or by death.

When the Bishop learns that there is to be a vacancy they will inform the “Designated Officer”. This might be the Diocesan Registrar, or Diocesan Secretary or Archdeacon.

It is possible at this point for suspension of presentation to be considered in which case please see our leaflet on suspensions. This present leaflet assumes no such suspension is taking place.

At the suitable point, no more than three months before a retirement and as close to the date of vacancy as possible in other situations, the Designated Officer issues a Notice of Vacancy to the Parish(es) and Patrons.

The Patrons then have nine months in which to make an appointment, otherwise their rights lapse to the Archbishop of the Province.

Once the PCC Secretary receives the notice of vacancy they must call a meeting of the PCC within four weeks. In most circumstances the PCC will know that there is going to be a vacancy and action can already have been taken and a meeting planned, but nevertheless this formal meeting must be held and certain business must be conducted, in particular:

- Approve the parish profile.
- Appoint parish representatives.
- Decide whether to consider resolutions under Ordination of Women Measure
- Decide whether to ask the patrons to advertise.

This meeting is normally known as the **Section 11 Meeting**. It is a meeting of the PCC and although sometimes an Archdeacon, or other person, may meet with the PCC they have no right to be present or attend the part of the meeting where the business listed above is conducted. There are exceptional meetings at which an Archdeacon may be present and chair a PCC, but not a Section 11 meeting.

The Bishop institutes

Sometimes a candidate will arrange to see the Bishop on the same day that they visit the parish, though this is less common than it was.

The Bishop will have a wider perspective on the ministry within an area and the Diocese and their wisdom is to be welcomed at every stage of the appointment process. However, within the formalities of the appointment the Bishop on receipt of the approved nomination must decide whether to institute.

If the Bishop is one of the patrons then it is unlikely that they have agreed for someone to visit the parish if they are then unwilling to institute, though there are circumstances in which this could happen.

There are certain situations under which the Bishop can refuse to institute, particularly in relation to doctrinal and moral error and sometimes the Bishop will ask for a reference from another Bishop and have to treat the information in confidence. A candidate is entitled to see information passed over except in very limited circumstances relating to child protection. However, it is possible, though extremely rare, that the Bishop may have good reason for not being prepared to institute without being able to share the exact reasons.

It can also sometimes happen that a Bishop thinks there are good reasons why the reps. should reconsider, though the reps. are not obliged to do so and should be careful to ensure that a candidate is not being unfairly discriminated against.

Whatever happens, the Bishop has only a limited time in which to respond to the patrons nomination, otherwise they must agree to institute.

The exception to all the above is the CRB check, which is now mandatory and sometimes does not come quickly. The post will normally be subject to it being carried out successfully but often an announcement will not be made until it is completed.

The Appointment

Once all the above is complete an announcement can be made in both the parishes and agreement can be reached about when the

If someone considers that this may be from the Lord then the Patrons will contact the parish reps and invite them to consider the person. Taking this step means that the Trust Directors are prepared to nominate and present and they would not ordinarily expect to be involved in interviewing.

The Parish reps decide

The parish reps should now arrange to meet the candidate, show them round the parish and form a view as to whether they are the right person for this post. It would be normal to have a formal interview within this.

The Trust would also encourage the parish reps to make their own enquiries and, so long as it does not delay the process, to consider visiting the candidates present parish, incognito.

If the candidate is married it is likely that their wife will wish to visit as well - after all they are going to have to live in the place - but reps must be careful in how they handle this. People's circumstance vary widely and whilst a couple must be united in the call to ministry a clergy spouse should not be expected to fit a particular mould and if they are then it suggests that the parish has a problem with others not being willing to minister as they should.

It is right that a candidate should meet others in the parish, particularly if there is a staff team. The candidate might also want to meet with the Area Dean. However, the reps must beware that the decision rests with them and asking for too many opinions can create difficulties and sometimes cause hurt. Wisdom is required in knowing just how much to involve others whilst at the same time giving the candidate a good idea of what they might be getting themselves into.

The parish reps and the candidate must now come to a mind as to whether they consider this appointment to be right. Unless there are exceptional reasons this decision should be made fairly quickly, it is not fair to any party to delay this decision without very good reason.

If all the parties agree then there are forms to be filled in on which the patron formally nominates and the parish reps formally accept. The form goes to the Bishop.

The PCC specifies

The first task of the PCC is to produce a Parish Profile, which will include a statement of needs and person specification. It is important that this is done well. Not only will it be how candidates learn about the parish but it gives a clear indication what the parish sees as its priorities for the future and the qualities required in a minister.

The PCC should not be afraid to be specific, nor of stating the obvious.

However, the danger of a profile is that it paints an unrealistic picture of a parish and sets out an impossible model for your future minister.

It is important to also keep in mind the wider climate in relation to discrimination in employment. There are some things it is appropriate to say, and some things it is not. This is particularly true in matters of age and whether the candidate is married. However, there Biblical priorities for ministry are vitally important and there is a climate which says you should not ask anything about personal life, whereas Scripture most definitely expects that you should. We cover this in more detail in our leaflet on Biblical Priorities in Leadership.

It is advisable and beneficial that a Job Description and Person Specification be drawn up at some point in the process. The Job Description has a particular use in relation to ministerial development, review and, potentially, capability. There is no requirement to draw these up nor is there any rule about who must do them or about how to resolve a difference of opinion. CST advises that they be produced at the same time as the Profile and indeed be seen as part of it. The alternative is to invite the Archdeacon or Diocesan HR staff to draw them up based on the profile.

The Bishop can ask that the profile include a Diocesan statement of needs and this can be helpful, but the PCC is not bound to include it.

On receipt of the Profile the Bishop and Patrons can request a meeting of all the parties to discuss it and this will be done where it is

felt that the Profile is unclear or where it says things that are inappropriate. This meeting is known as the Section 12 Meeting.

The PCC must also appoint parish representatives. Usually there are two reps but there can be situations where there are more. Though this role used to fall to Churchwardens it does so no longer but the reps must be members of the PCC. It can help if the reps have experience of interviewing in a secular context but it can equally be difficult for people to adjust to the fact that ordained ministry is a life, not a job, and that the Church's approach to appointments is not the same as the world's, not least because of the teaching set out in Scripture.

The PCC must also decide whether to consider the Resolutions on the ordained ministry of women. It is not necessary to vote on the resolutions, but consideration must be given to them. So, if the PCC has already passed Resolution A or B, or both, it must decide whether to reconsider them, or to continue without change. Likewise, if the resolutions have never been considered or were considered and not passed the PCC must now decide whether it wishes to consider and vote on them.

Passing Resolution B would mean that the PCC will only accept a man as incumbent. This is binding on all the parties, the reps, the Patrons and the Bishop.

Passing Resolution A would mean that the PCC would not allow a lady minister to lead communion services during the interregnum or be appointed to other ordained posts in the parish/team. A parish cannot pass Resolution A if a lady is already licensed to the parish.

The PCC must lastly decide whether to ask the Patrons to advertise. Patrons are not required to accept the request but if they do then the PCC will normally be asked to pay for the advert. This point brings us into the two main ways in which an appointment can be made.

There is no requirement to consider the so-called Resolution C (concerning extended oversight) but where a PCC has passed this it is usual for the Bishop exercising extended oversight to be involved at least informally in the appointment process and in such a situation the PCC should request this.

The Patron nominates

The Patron is expected to nominate, or present to the benefice. However, there are two main ways by which this is achieved. Church Society Trust much prefers the traditional method and although this has been out of favour there are signs that it is becoming more popular again. However, the Patrons will have to decide early on which method to use. The traditional approach can be thought of "headhunting" in which advertising is not normal but possible. The second approach is by competitive interview in which advertising is normal, though not always necessary.

The two methods are explained separate and since we are biased we have explained the headhunting method first. It is possible to have a mixed economy in which "headhunting" is tried first and if an appointment is not made then advertising and competitive interview takes place.

"Headhunting"

If the patrons have agreed to pursue this approach then on receipt of the parish profile their job is to search for someone who fits what the parish is looking for, bearing in mind that even clergy are not perfect! The evangelical patronage societies together maintain a list of clergy seeking appointments and the Trust Directors in addition keep in contact with a large number of clergy. Other patrons, including Bishops, also have contacts and lists of those who they know are open to a move. Some clergy are not willing to apply for posts but will consider them if asked. This partly reflects the traditional system of appointments which many still prefer, partly it is because of the concept of the "call" to ministry and partly that applying and being interviewed for posts can be disrupting and unsettling. News about vacancies travels fast in clergy circles, particularly where a parish has a distinctive churchmanship.

If everything works smoothly the Patrons can start approaching individuals very soon after receiving the notice of vacancy. Some clergy respond immediately saying no, others ask for a few days to consider but if they are open to the possibility that this reflects the call of God then we would push for a prompt response.