

# Joint Council Information Sheet

## What is a Joint Council?

A Joint Council is a legal body which is set up with the agreement of the parishes within the Team, under the rules of the Church of England. The Scheme defines the powers and responsibilities of Joint Council. Each one is different. For the Leominster Team, the Scheme is what is called a Partial Scheme, and is minimal. Each PCC within the Team will retain their current responsibilities, resources and bank accounts, continuing to operate as now. The Joint Council will be the body corporate which employs the Team Administration staff (based at the Forbury) and manage the Team bank accounts.

## Why do we need a Joint Council?

Charity Commission and Church of England rules have changed since the Leominster Team was set up. It no longer qualifies as a body corporate, so is no longer able to employ and manage staff or hold bank accounts. So the Joint Council is basically the legalisation of the current position. In the short term, the Priory PCC has taken on this responsibility but only as a stop gap. The Team Bank accounts have been held separately from those of the Priory.

## What will do Joint Council do?

The Joint Council will employ the administration staff and oversee the team bank accounts. The Joint Council will be chaired by the Rector, and each parish will have one member except for the Priory which will have two. The Joint Council will meet a minimum of two times a year and examine the finances. It will also agree how to share the team costs among the parishes.

## How do we join the Joint Council?

At each Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) within the Team, a vote will be taken on a proposal for the parish to join the Joint Council. Only people on the Electoral Roll can vote, and a two thirds majority of those voting is needed for the parish to join the Joint Council. A vote will also be taken to select a representative to serve on the Joint Council for one year.

## What are the benefits?

- The Joint Council will enable the Team to continue – there is no Plan B
- Every parish will have influence on the working of the Team – if you don't join you have no say
- Transparency of the Team accounts
- A requirement for the minutes from the Joint Council to be shared with PCCs, so everyone can see what is being discussed and what decisions are taken.
- Increased accountability and transparency
- All the benefits from working as a group
- Increased efficiency for the Team Vicars, with admin tasks being done by the admin team
- Shared resource of the Forbury – meeting rooms, library, copying and printing facilities
- Handling of enquiries regarding weddings, funerals and baptisms
- Central purchasing
- A uniform approach
- Management of fees for weddings and funerals
- Printing
- Team rota
- Joint courses eg Lent course
- Shared approach to Safeguarding
- Shared access to information on organists etc

## What are the consequences of not joining?

- Increased administrative load for PCCs, particularly Treasurers, in terms of invoices and handling enquiries
- Increased administrative load for Team Vicars
- Increased costs if resources not shared
- Loss of benefits of bulk purchasing
- Can the Team continue without a Joint Council being formed?
- If a parish decides not to join the Joint Council, to join at a later date requires the agreement of all parishes in the scheme