

- [Resolution](#)
- [Disputes](#)
- [Regulations](#)
- [Independent Reviewer](#)
- [How to bring a grievance](#)
- [Key Considerations](#)
- [Handling of grievances](#)
- [General concerns about the operation of the House's Declaration](#)

In May 2014, the House of Bishops made its [\*\*Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests \(GS Misc 1076\)\*\*](#) in the context of the impending legislation enabling the consecration of women to the episcopate which received final approval by the General Synod in July 2014.

Central to the Declaration are the five guiding principles which the House first commended in May 2013, and which the General Synod welcomed in its resolution of 20 November 2013. As stated in the Declaration, they need to be read one with the other and held together in tension, rather than being applied selectively:

- 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 the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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
- 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.

The House also issued a [Guidance Note \(GS Misc 1077\)](#) in May 2014.

## Resolution

The House's Declaration sets out arrangements under which parishes can take advantage of arrangements available to those whose theological conviction leads them to seek the priestly or episcopal ministry of men. Under these, Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) can pass a resolution in the following recommended form:

'This PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.'

Further guidance about passing these Resolutions is set out in paragraphs 6ff of the House's Guidance Note (GS Misc 1077).

## Disputes

In the vast majority of instances, it is anticipated that it will be possible for parishes and bishops to agree arrangements which are consistent with the Declaration. Where this is not the case, and the PCC considers that the bishop or some other office holder has acted in a way which is inconsistent with the Declaration, it may bring a grievance to the Independent Reviewer appointed under the Regulations it has made for the resolution of disputes under the Declaration.

## Regulations

The House of Bishops made the Regulations under Canon C 29 on 17 November 2014. [Read the Regulations.](#)

## Independent Reviewer

As set out in GS Misc 1090, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York initially appointed Sir Philip Mawer as the Independent Reviewer under the terms of the Regulations. In February 2018 he was succeeded by Sir William Fittall until March 2022.

Maggie Swinson, Vice Chair of the Anglican Consultative Council, is the current Independent Reviewer, [assuming the role in December 2022.](#)

## How to bring a grievance

The office of the Independent Reviewer is being supported by Sue Moore in the Central Secretariat of the Archbishops' Council, who can be contacted by using the webform below.

- Current Start
- Preview
- Complete

1 of 3 (0%)

Name

Email Address

Subject

Message

Preview

# Key Considerations

- The grievance has to relate to actions taken, or omissions, by bishops and certain other types of office holder in relation to the paragraphs of the Declaration (16-29 and 33) which deal with the making of arrangements for parishes and non-parochial places of worship which seek the priestly or episcopal ministry of men.
- Before approaching the Reviewer's Office, the PCC must give the office holder in respect of whom it wishes to bring a grievance a reasonable opportunity to address the grievance.
- The grievance must be made in writing and authorised by a PCC resolution passed either by a majority of those present at a meeting at which at least two-thirds of those entitled to attend are present, or by a majority of all members of the PCC.
- The grievance should normally be made within three months of the action or omission in question.
- The PCC's letter must specify:

1. The office holder in respect of whom the grievance is brought;
2. The nature of the act or omission in question;
3. The nature of the PCC's grievance in relation to it.

- The PCC must send a copy of its letter to the Reviewer to the diocesan bishop, or (if different) the office holder in respect of whom the grievance is brought.

The full process for bringing a grievance is set out in paragraphs 9 – 15 of the House's Regulations.

## Handling of grievances

- The receipt of a grievance will be acknowledged.
- A check will be made that the grievance is in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.
- In order to decide whether the grievance is justified, partly justified or unjustified, enquiries will be made as the Independent Reviewer sees fit.  
Views will normally be sought from the office holder against whom the grievance has been made. It is possible that it may take a while to clarify the necessary facts.
- Subject to that, the review will normally be completed within two months of the grievance being received.
- The Reviewer may choose to refer the matter to mediation (depending on the circumstances) or in some other way seek to achieve a settlement of the grievance which is acceptable to all parties.
- The Reviewer's decision will be communicated in writing to each of the parties (and the diocesan bishop, if he/she is not one of them)

Further details about the consideration of grievances by the reviewer are contained in paragraphs 16-27 of the Regulations.

## General concerns about the operation of the House's Declaration

Anyone (and not just a PCC) may raise a concern, in writing, with the Reviewer about any aspect of the operation of the House's Declaration. Such a concern may relate to more than one act or omission under the Declaration, and to more than one parish or diocese. If such a concern is raised with the Reviewer, he may undertake an inquiry into it.

## Annual reports

The Reviewer publishes an annual report to the Archbishops following the end of each calendar year. Previous years are available below.

- [Report of the Independent Reviewer for 2015](#) (544.11 KB)
- [Report of the Independent Reviewer for 2016](#) (363.22 KB)
- [Report of the Independent Reviewer for 2017](#) (512.88 KB)
- [Report of the Independent Reviewer 2018](#) (81.39 KB)
- [Report of the Independent Reviewer for 2019](#) (70.45 KB)
- [Report of the Independent Reviewer for 2020](#) (132.64 KB)
- [Independent Reviewer Annual Report 2021](#) (143.33 KB)
- [Independent Reviewer Annual Report 2022](#) (28.42 KB)
- [Independent Reviewer Annual Report 2023](#) (90.03 KB)

# Individual Reports from the Independent Reviewer

- [All Saints, Cheltenham Report of the Independent Reviewer](#) (1.17 MB)
- [Independent Reviewer - Sheffield Report](#) (815.86 KB)
- [Chrism Masses Report of the Independent Reviewer](#) (1.2 MB)
- [Notes on the Operation of the Resolution of Disputes Procedure \(December 2015\)](#) (337.32 KB)
- [Review of the Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns Appendices](#) (8.74 MB)
- [Grievance from the PCC of St George's Headstone](#) (1.42 MB)
- [Wakefield Cathedral Independent Reviewer Report](#) (3.17 MB)
- [The Independent Reviewer's Report on Lullington & Orchardleigh PCC](#) (1.63 MB)
- [The Grievance document from Lullington & Orchardleigh PCC](#) (1.74 MB)
- [Appendix 1 relating to the Grievance from Lullington & Orchardleigh PCC](#) (3.61 MB)
- [St Barnabas Southampton: Report of the Independent Reviewer](#) (1.3 MB)
- [REPORT Oxford St Barnabas St Paul with St Thomas the Martyr](#) (2.17 MB)
- [Independent Reviewer Report - WATCH re Blackburn appointment process](#) (1.49 MB)

## PCC

The Parochial Church Council - each parish has this executive committee, which is made of clergy, church wardens and lay members.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/general-synod/structure/house-bishops/house-bishops-declaration-ministry-bishops-and-priests>