

**GENERAL SYNOD**  
**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Church Property Measure**  
**Comments and explanations**

The Church Property Measure consolidates, with corrections and minor improvements, a number of enactments relating to church property.

### **Introduction**

1. The Legislative Committee of the General Synod, to which the Measure entitled Church Property Measure ('the Measure') has been referred, has the honour to submit the Measure to the Ecclesiastical Committee with these Comments and Explanations.

### *Summary of the Measure*

2. The Measure consolidates, with corrections and minor improvements, a number of enactments relating to dealings with parsonage houses, dealings with and the management of glebe land and the acquisition of new land for church purposes. It also consolidates a number of miscellaneous and general provisions relating to church property. In relation to the consolidation of enactments, the standing orders of the General Synod define "corrections and minor improvements" as follows—

*"(3) "Correction and minor improvement" means an amendment the sole effect of which is—*

*(a) to resolve an ambiguity;*

*(b) to remove a doubt;*

*(c) to bring an obsolete provision into conformity with modern practice;*

*(d) to remove an unnecessary provision or an anomaly not of substantial importance;*

*(e) to improve the form or manner in which the law is stated;*

*(f) to bring a provision into conformity with the existing law;*

*(g) to make transitional, transitory or saving provision which is necessary in consequence of an amendment within any of paragraphs (a) to (f)."*

3. The principal enactments consolidated by the draft Measure include the following:
  - The Parsonages Measure 1938
  - The New Parishes Measure 1943

- The Church Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1960 (in part)
  - The Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976 (in part)
4. The draft Measure also consolidates statutory provisions contained in a further 22 enactments. For details of the enactments which are consolidated (and therefore repealed), reference should be made to Schedule 3 to the Measure (repeals and revocations).

## **The provisions of the Measure**

### ***Part 1 Parsonage land***

5. Part 1 restates the provisions of the Parsonages Measure 1938. Accordingly, it provides for the sale, exchange and demolition of parsonage houses and for their construction, purchase and improvement. It provides for the transfer to the diocesan board of finance of parsonage houses and land that are not required as an incumbent's official residence or for an incumbent's convenient occupation (in which case the transferred property is held by the DBF as part of the diocesan glebe land for the benefit of the diocesan stipends fund). It provides for conveyancing formalities, for the application of the proceeds of sale of benefice property and for supplementary matters.

### ***Part 2 Glebe land***

6. Part 2 restates provisions of the Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976 that are concerned with glebe land. It continues the functions of the diocesan board of finance of holding, managing and dealing with diocesan glebe land for the benefit of the diocesan stipends fund. It provides for the establishment by DBFs of land management schemes, including the establishment of management subsidiaries. It empowers a DBF or a management subsidiary to acquire or appropriate land as part of the diocesan glebe land and to deal with that land (whether by sale, exchange, lease, mortgage, charge or otherwise) subject to certain specified conditions. It empowers a DBF or management subsidiary to make diocesan glebe land available for various ecclesiastical purposes. It also makes supplementary provision.

### ***Part 3 Newly acquired land***

7. Part 3 restates the provisions of the New Parishes Measure 1943 concerned with the acquisition of land by a DBF for new churches and for other ecclesiastical purposes and makes supplementary provision.

### ***Part 4 Miscellaneous and general***

8. Part 4 restates various provisions of a miscellaneous nature contained in the Church Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1960, the Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976 and other enactments. It introduces the Schedules which contain consequential amendments to other legislation, transitional and saving provision, and repeals and revocations of other legislation. It also makes provision for the Measure's commencement, extent and short title.

### **Drafting notes, table of origins and table of destinations**

9. Drafting notes, which are annexed, have been prepared by Legislative Counsel. These explain the approach taken by him in relation to various points which arose in preparing the Measure.
10. Legislative Counsel has provided a table of origins and a table of destinations. These show, respectively, the legislative origins of the provisions which are restated in the draft Measure, and the places in the Measure where restated provisions of existing legislation are to be found.

### **Proceedings in the General Synod**

11. The Measure was introduced into the Synod for First Consideration in February 2018. As a consolidation Measure, it was not committed to a Revision Committee and there was no Revision Stage in the full Synod.
12. A number of drafting amendments were made to the Measure at the Final Drafting stage which was taken at the July 2018 group of sessions of the Synod. These included an amendment to section 49 to make express provision for notices to be given by electronic means, the insertion of additional consequential amendments in Schedule 1 and minor amendments to Schedule 3 (repeals).
13. The Final Approval stage immediately followed when the Measure received the approval of all three Houses. The voting on the Measure at the end of the Final Approval stage was as follows—

	In favour	Against
Bishops	25	0
Clergy	104	0
Laity	126	0

### **Conclusion**

14. The Legislative Committee invites the Ecclesiastical Committee to issue a favourable report on the Measure. Should the Ecclesiastical Committee require any further information or explanation, the Legislative Committee stands ready to provide it.

On behalf of the Legislative Committee

*Geoffrey Tattersall*

Deputy Chair

September 2018

## Church Property Measure

### Drafting Notes

#### Introduction

1. These notes use the following abbreviations—

PM 1938 – the Parsonages Measure 1938

NPM 1943 – the New Parishes Measure 1943

CPMPM 1960 – the Church Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1960

EGM 1976 – the Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976

IA 1978 – the Interpretation Act 1978

SOs – the Standing Orders of the General Synod

2. The consolidation includes a number of “corrections and minor improvements” within the meaning of SO 63(3), which provides as follows—

*“(3) “Correction and minor improvement” means an amendment the sole effect of which is—*

*(a) to resolve an ambiguity;*

*(b) to remove a doubt;*

*(c) to bring an obsolete provision into conformity with modern practice;*

*(d) to remove an unnecessary provision or an anomaly not of substantial importance;*

*(e) to improve the form or manner in which the law is stated;*

*(f) to bring a provision into conformity with the existing law;*

*(g) to make transitional, transitory or saving provision which is necessary in consequence of an amendment within any of paragraphs (a) to (f).”*

#### Section 1 (sale, exchange or demolition of parsonage house)

3. *Subsection (2)* removes a doubt in section 1(1) PM 1938 by providing that a disposal of a parsonage house need not include adjoining land. It removes an inconsistency by ensuring that the sale of the site of a parsonage house after demolition can include adjoining land. It makes clear that, on a disposal of part, it does not matter if adjoining land adjoins a part not being disposed of. These changes are made under SO 63(3)(b) (removal of doubt) and (3)(d) (removal of anomaly not of substantial importance).
4. Also on *subsection (2)*, the reference to “land” in section 1(1) PM 1938 has, in the absence of a contrary intention, the meaning given in paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 IA 78. That definition is the main proposition in *section 48(8)*. Given that some weight rests on the references to land in these provisions, the existing definition of “land” is retained in preference to what would otherwise be the default definition in Schedule 1 IA 78.
5. *Subsection (5)* removes an inconsistency in section 1 PM 1938 by permitting the disposal of land that has been acquired as or for the site of a parsonage house. Such a case can arise where, for example, a site for a parsonage house is acquired but planning permission to build the house is refused. Without provision to this effect, the land must, before being sold, be transferred to

the diocesan board of finance to be held as part of the diocesan glebe land. This makes for a cumbersome procedure and restricts the allocation of the sale proceeds to the diocesan stipends fund rather than to the Parsonages Board. This provision is included in reliance on SO 63(3)(d) (removal of anomaly not of substantial importance).

6. *Subsection (10)(a)* clarifies the meaning of “land retained for the benefice affected” in section 1(2)(i) PM 1938. Rights of way are currently reserved over former parsonage land so as, for example, to provide continuing access to a church or churchyard (which would not generally be considered the property of the benefice). The new provision reflects that practice and is included in reliance on SO 63(3)(b) (removal of doubt).

### **Section 3 (consent to dealing under section 1 or 2)**

7. *Subsections (1)(d), (2) and (3)* do not restate the reference in section 1(3)(iii) and (iiia) PM 1938 to property that is “proposed to be disposed of”, as it is not quite apt for a case where property is to be pulled down. But the intention of section 1(3AA) PM 1938 is that consent (other than that of the Church Commissioners) is required for demolition.

### **Section 6 (leasing)**

8. *Subsection (3)* entitles a diocesan board of finance to apply to the county court for an order to require the provision of the information concerned. This appears to be the intention of section 31 EGM 1976, as the county court would be the appropriate forum in which to seek a remedy. This provision is made in reliance on SO 63(3)(b) (removal of doubt) and (3)(e) (improvement of manner in which law stated).

### **Section 16 (general functions of diocesan board of finance)**

9. *Subsection (4)* restates section 16(1) EGM 1976 and includes wording at the beginning to set the provision in its historical context. Section 16 came into force on 22 November 1976 (the date when EGM 1976 received Royal Assent) to facilitate the transfer of glebe land from incumbents to diocesan boards of finance on 1 April 1978. Accordingly, section 16 has already done most of its work but could, it is thought, still have some practical effect in relation, say, to long-standing tenants.
10. *Subsection (5)* is included on the same basis as *section 6(3)* (see paragraph 8 above).

### **Section 17 (land management scheme)**

11. *Subsection (2)* makes express what is implied by section 19(3) EGM 1976 by providing that the diocesan board of finance may itself establish a committee for the purposes of a land management scheme (as well as appointing the Parsonages Board or a committee established under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972). It is assumed that no other body could serve as a committee for this purpose.

### **Section 22 (notice of proposed dealing)**

12. *Subsection (1)* recasts section 20(5) EGM 1976 by requiring notice to be sent according to the type of transaction involved rather than whether the consent of the Church Commissioners is needed. This approach is clearer than the current one and is adopted in reliance on SO 63(3)(e) (improvement of manner in which law stated).

### **Section 23 (grants and appropriations)**

13. *Subsection (1)* does not restate the reference in section 23(1) EGM 1976 to replacing an existing church, on the basis that it is unnecessary. The replacement of a church would, in effect, involve the construction of a new one (except in the case of rebuilding a demolished church on the same site, in which case there would be no site or building to acquire and the rebuilding would be done under a faculty). There would also need to be a separate pastoral church buildings scheme to close the existing church.
14. *Subsection (1)* does, however, refer to the possibility of replacing a building other than a church used as a place of public worship. This change and the one mentioned in the previous paragraph are made in reliance on SO 63(3)(d) (removal of anomaly not of substantial importance).
15. Also on *subsection (1)*, it is not clear whether “grant” in section 23(1) EGM 1976, which uses the word with the meaning it has in section 14(1) NPM 1943, includes the grant of a leasehold interest in land. *Section 48(11)* provides that it does have that broader meaning and is included in reliance on SO 63(3)(b) (removal of doubt).
16. *Subsection (2)* clarifies the relationship between this section and section 20 and is included in reliance on SO 63(3)(b) (removal of doubt).

### **Section 25 (proceeds of sale)**

17. *Subsection (4)* does not restate the reference in section 25(3) EGM 1976 to the “related” transaction. It is thought to be a reference to the discharge of the mortgage or charge. This change is made in reliance on SO 63(3)(b) (removal of doubt).

### **Section 28 (acquisition of land)**

18. In light of the provision in this section about buildings which are used as both a church and a church hall, *section 48(9)* includes a definition of “church” for the purposes of the Measure as a whole, along the lines of that in section 106(1) of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, so as to cover mixed-use cases of that kind.

### **Section 33 (land no longer required for purpose for which acquired)**

19. *Subsection (3)* includes some bracketed wording which is not in section 17(1B) NPM 1943, to pick up an implication that was missed when the provision was added by the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2014. The bracketed words avoid giving the diocesan board of finance power to appropriate land which it holds on behalf of a parochial church council (rather than just land it holds in its own right). This provision is included in reliance on SO 63(3)(b) (removal of doubt).
20. *Subsection (6)(b)* makes provision not in section 17(1) NPM 1943 in order to pick up a missed consequential amendment. On a transaction of the kind referred to here, the land vests in the incumbent as part of the parsonage and so should be disposed of in the same manner as the parsonage house etc. This provision is included in reliance on SO 63(3)(b) (removal of doubt).
21. *Subsection (9)* acknowledges the decision in *Re St. Mary Magdalene, Paddington* [1980] 1 All ER 279 by providing that, in so far as there is a common law power to sell land of the kind in question, the statutory procedure derived from section 17 NPM 1943 does not prohibit it. This provision is included in reliance on SO 63(3)(e) (improvement of manner in which law stated).

### **Section 39 (memorandum and articles of association)**

22. *Subsection (1)* restates a provision of EGM 1976 but provides for it to have effect generally in the consolidation, so that it applies to functions of a diocesan board of finance under the PM 1938 and NPM 1943 as well as those under the EGM 1976. This is not a significant policy change and merely provides consistency. It is made in reliance on SO 63(3)(d) (removal of anomaly not of substantial importance).

### **Section 40 (Church Commissioners: information and advice)**

23. *Subsection (1)* of this section also applies a provision of EGM 1976 generally, for the same reason as *section 39(1)* (see paragraph 22 above).

### **Section 41 (covenants)**

24. *Subsection (1)(b)* does not restate the obsolete reference in section 8(2) CPMPM 1960 to the guardian of the spiritualities.

### **Section 46 (signification of consent)**

25. This section generalises a number of provisions so as to provide a consistent approach on signification of consent. For that purpose, *subsection (1)* also makes provision for a diocesan board of finance, and *subsection (3)* also makes provision for the registered patron of a benefice, a parochial church council and the managing trustees of land vested in a diocesan board of finance. This provision is made in reliance on SO 63(3)(d) (removal of anomaly not of substantial importance).

26. *Subsection (5)* imposes an express requirement for certain documents to specify whether the Church Commissioners' consent has been obtained and, if it has not, to specify the exception relied on. This provision makes express what is currently implied by section 9(2B) and (2C) PM 1938 and is included in reliance on SO 63(3)(e) (improvement of manner in which law stated).

27. *Subsection (6)* does not restate the reference in section 9(2B) PM 1938 to a case where the consent of the Parsonages Board is not required, as there are no such cases in the provisions being consolidated.

### **Section 47 (execution of documents)**

28. *Subsections (1) and (2)* apply to *section 33*, although the existing provision in section 17 NPM 1943 does not make equivalent provision. They remove an inconsistency and do so in reliance on SO 63(3)(d) (removal of anomaly not of substantial importance).

29. *Subsection (3)* generalises provision which currently applies more narrowly, on the basis of the reasoning underlying *section 46*.

### **Section 48 (references to land)**

30. This section does not restate the definition of "glebe land" in section 45(1) EGM 1976. It is covered to the extent necessary in the definition of "diocesan glebe land" in *subsection (6)(a)* and in *sections 16 and 27*.

31. *Subsection (8)* brings together the various definitions of “land” in the provisions being consolidated. In PM 1938, there is no express definition, with the result that paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 IA 78 applies; its effect is restated in the opening words of *subsection (8)*. In NPM 1943, section 29(1) defines “land” to include “hereditaments corporeal or incorporeal of any tenure”. But that Measure also places express references to buildings alongside references to land, perhaps to clarify the effect of the provisions about land being used for new buildings. It is thought sufficient for the purposes of the consolidation to rely just on the definition in Schedule 2 IA 78. The definition in section 45(1) EGM 1976 adds a reference to mines and minerals to the general definition and then excludes from it advowsons as incorporeal hereditaments.

#### **Section 49 (other interpretation etc.)**

32. *Subsection (9)* defines “benefice” generally, using the definition in section 45(1) EGM 1976. The definition accordingly applies to the references to “benefice” in the provisions of Part 3 which restate NPM 1943. That Measure does not define “benefice” for its own purposes and therefore relies on the definition in the Interpretation Measure 1925. It is not thought necessary to follow that approach here, as the definition in EGM 1976 produces the right result for the consolidation as a whole.

33. *Subsection (12)* makes express provision to enable notices or notifications to be given by electronic means. Although nothing in the provisions being consolidated expressly prohibits that, there is nonetheless a lack of clarity as to the position and this provision would remove any doubt by making express what is thought to be implied. It is included in reliance on SO 63(3)(b) (removal of doubt) and (3)(e) (improvement of manner in which law stated)