

Bill No.5

Proposer: Archdeacon Barry Forde

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“In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.”

Now I don't know if that is how Tolkien might describe clergy residences, which by comparison are positively palatial, nor do I believe that Bilbo Baggins needed a glebe agreement in the Shire ...

But clergy living in glebes have the wonderful provision of homes provided by the parish that are to be inspected and maintained according to the standards of the diocese and wider Church, and clergy have to sign glebe agreements for the same.

The Bill before Synod is essentially seeking to improve the administration and good governance of those glebe agreements in the interests of the cleric, parish, diocese and Representative Body. As the explanatory memorandum makes clear, at present a member of the clergy instituted or licensed to a parish whose duties involve residence in the parish, must sign a glebe agreement within two months of taking up the role. This means that a glebe can be occupied for up to two months without a glebe agreement, and who knows what havoc might be wreaked! No admittance except on party business.

And secondly, whilst the current regulation states that the cleric must sign this agreement, there is no actual requirement to return it either to the diocese or the Representative Body, and these are the bodies through which proposals come for glebe repairs, renovations and so on.

For the sake of good governance of occupying property, and ensuring records are up to date in both the diocese and the RB, this Bill has two simple proposals.

First, that three copies of the glebe agreement will be signed so that the cleric may retain a copy, a copy may be lodged with the diocesan office, and a copy with the Representative Body.

Second, that all this is attended to immediately prior to the institution or licensing, when minds are most acutely attuned to fulfilling all righteousness in terms of making declarations, signing forms, and moving into the new glebe. All done and dusted from day one.

Of course, there may be instances when residence cannot be taken up immediately, and the glebe agreement can make provision for the date that residence will commence, or alternative

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arrangements have to be made for residency, and that is best left attended to on a case-by-case basis.

This Bill, however, will capture simply and effectively the vast majority of appointments and residences, and I propose that the Bill be considered in principle.