

PARTIAL SCHEME TO ESTABLISH A JOINT COUNCIL

THE BENEFICE OF THE ALCESTER MINSTER

Preamble

1. This Scheme is made in accordance with Rules M37 to M42 of the 2025 Rules, which confer power on any two or more connected parishes to make a scheme to establish a Joint Council in place of their separate PCCs.
2. Alcester, Arrow with Weethley, Kinwarton with Great Alne, Haselor and Coughton with Sambourne are connected for the purposes of Rule M37 as they each belong to the Benefice of the Alcester Minster.
3. This Scheme has been made in accordance with the procedural requirements in M42 of the 2025 Rules:
 - (a) The Scheme was approved by at least two-thirds of the persons present and voting at a meeting of each parish to which this Scheme applies held on the following dates:

(i) Alcester	—
(ii) Arrow with Weethley	—
(iii) Kinwarton with Great Alne	—
(iv) Haselor	—
(v) Coughton with Sambourne	—

[list the names of each parish and the dates on which the meeting was held at which the votes were cast.]

- (b) The Scheme, once approved in accordance with (a) above, was referred to the Bishop's Council and Standing Committee on [date] together with:
 - (i) a copy of the resolution passed by the meeting of each parish at which the Scheme was approved; and
 - (ii) a statement of the number of persons attending each meeting and the numbers at each meeting who voted for and against approving the Scheme.
- (c) The Bishop's Council and Standing Committee duly approved the Scheme on [date] [following any required amendments having first been approved at meetings of at least two-thirds of the persons present and voting at a meeting of each parish to which this Scheme applies].

Citation and commencement

4. This Scheme may be cited as: "The Alcester Minster Joint Council Scheme".
5. This Scheme comes into operation on [insert date].

Interpretation

6. “the Bishop” means the bishop of the diocese of Coventry.
7. “the Archdeacon” means an Archdeacon in the diocese of Coventry.
8. “the 2025 Rules” means the Church Representation Rules 2025.
9. “the Benefice” means the Benefice of the Alcester Minster.
10. All references to Rules in this Scheme are reference to Rules in the 2025 Rules.
11. A reference in this Scheme to a provision made by or under a Measure or Act of Parliament is to be read as a reference to that provision as for the time being amended, extended or applied by or under any other such provision.
12. “Minister” means
 - (a) the incumbent or priest in charge of the Benefice, or
 - (b) a vicar in a team ministry to the extent that the duties of a minister are assigned to the vicar by a pastoral scheme or order or by the vicar’s licence from the bishop.
13. “the Parishes” means Alcester, Arrow with Weethley, Kinwarton with Great Alne, Haselor, and Coughton with Sambourne all together comprising the Benefice
14. “the PCC” means the Parochial Church Council in each of the Parishes and “PCCs” shall be construed accordingly.

Membership

15. The members of the Joint Council are —
 - (a) The minister of the benefice.
 - (b) One additional member of the clergy licensed to the Parishes selected by the minister.
 - (c) Two lay representatives from each parish, elected annually from and by their respective PCCs each year at their first meeting after the APCM. Lay representatives will serve until the election of their successors.
 - (d) Up to two members co-opted by the Joint Council, one of whom may be the treasurer if not chosen from the other representatives. Co-opted members will serve until the conclusion of the first meeting of the Joint Council on or after 1st June in each year.

Disqualification

16. The provisions of the 2025 Rules on disqualification from being nominated, chosen or elected as, or from serving as, a member of the PCC also apply in relation to the membership of the Joint Council.
17. A person who is disqualified by law from being a charity trustee and, accordingly, from being a member of a PCC is also disqualified from being a member of the Joint Council.

Chair

18. The chair of the Joint Council is the Minister. The Joint Council must elect a lay member as vice-chair; and the vice-chair acts as chair and accordingly has the powers vested in the chair –

- (a) where there is no minister,
- (b) where the minister is absent or unable to act for some other reason, or
- (c) where the minister invites the vice-chair to act as chair.

Officers of the Joint Council

- 19. The secretary of the Joint Council shall be any person so appointed by the Council for the purposes of recording the minutes of meetings, the holding of all documentation related to Joint Council business, the recording of any resolutions and the monitoring of actions taken on behalf of the Joint Council and the transaction of any correspondence relating to the affairs of the Joint Council.
- 20. The Joint Council shall appoint one or more suitably qualified persons to be treasurer to the Joint Council.
- 21. An Auditor or independent examiner must be appointed by the Joint Council, and may not be a member of the Joint Council. This person shall have access to all financial statements of the Joint Council and may, where necessary, require information and explanations from past or present treasurers or members of the Joint Council or the PCCs of the Parishes.
- 22. The Joint Council may appoint an Administrator upon such terms as the Council thinks fit.
- 23. The posts of Administrator, Secretary to the Joint Council, Treasurer and independent examiner, may be remunerated at the Joint Council's discretion subject always to the provisions of the Charities Act 2011 and the Church Representation Rules 2025 (or any statutory revision of them).
- 24. The Joint Council shall have the power to appoint further remunerated or unremunerated officers as it thinks fit.

Proceedings

- 25. The provisions of the Model Rules set out in Section B of Part 9 of the CRR 2025 shall apply to the proceedings of the Joint Council as though it was a parochial church council provided that if those provisions are inconsistent with the provisions of this Scheme then the provisions of this Scheme shall prevail.

Meetings

- 26. The Joint Council shall hold not less than four meetings each year as equally spaced as is practical. The first of such meetings taking place on or after 1st June in each year shall be when the Joint Council Officers (other than the Chair) shall be re-elected by simple majority.
- 27. The Chair shall at each meeting call for declarations of any potential conflict of interest from members. The Chair shall have the power to bar individual members from votes of the Joint Council where it is considered that a conflict of interest may arise. If the Chair is affected by a conflict of interest, the vice-chair or, if they are also conflicted, some other person without a conflict of interest chosen by the Joint Council shall chair the meeting. Anyone with a conflict of interest shall not vote on the matter in question.

28. The financial statements of the Joint Council for the year ending on the 31 December preceding the meeting, shall be presented no less than annually and voted on by members. Such reports shall be made available to the annual parochial meeting of each parish in the Benefice.
29. Dates for future meetings shall usually be set during meetings. A Joint Council meeting may be convened by the Chair or if requested, by at least a quarter of members at any time, giving at least ten days' notice to members (provided that such notice may be waived if all of the members consent.)
30. An agenda and any other documentation to be discussed at a forthcoming meeting shall have been delivered to members not less than seven days prior to the date of the relevant meeting provided that this shall not prevent matters being subsequently added to the agenda at the discretion of the Chair.
31. A point of order may be requested at any time during the meeting in order to amend the agenda but shall require the consent of three quarters of those members present and voting to be carried.
32. No business shall be transacted at a meeting of the Joint Council unless at least one quarter of members are present and voting and the majority of the members present are lay members. No business which is not specified in the agenda shall be transacted except by consent of the Chair excepting 28 above.
33. All business of the Joint Council shall be decided by simple majority of those present (noting 29 above), with the Chair holding a casting vote in the event of a tie.
34. Any meeting of the Joint Council may be adjourned to such time and place as may be determined at a meeting, at the Chair's discretion.
35. For the purposes of Rule M29 of the CRR 2025 it is agreed that the business of the Joint Council can be conducted by correspondence.

Minutes of the Joint Council

36. A record shall be made and retained of those present and voting at any Joint Council meeting.
37. All business transacted, resolutions put to the Joint Council and future actions agreed shall be recorded.
38. The minutes of Joint Council meetings shall be circulated to members of the Joint Council and to members of the PCCs and may be made available to other persons listed in the electoral roll of any PCC in the Benefice.

Functions

39. This Scheme transfers the following functions from the Parishes to the Joint Council. The functions and powers of the Joint Council are subject to the CRR and to any other rules and regulations of the Church of England in force at the time.
 - (a) Oversight of mission, vision and strategy for the Benefice and the Joint Council shall have the power to authorise, approve, order, manage and dissolve Benefice activities including those for mission, worship, outreach, fundraising, and for any specific sub-section of the population, all

for the common good and in furtherance of the mission and ministry of the Church of England in the Benefice.

- (b) Joint purchasing;
 - (c) Employment of staff in the Benefice;
 - (d) Payment of clergy expenses in the Benefice;
 - (e) Oversight of safeguarding training and compliance in the Benefice.
40. The Joint Council shall have the power to establish a standing committee and subsidiary committees from time-to-time. The composition, financial affairs, minutes and any other proceedings and actions of such committees shall be under the direction of the Joint Council.
41. The Joint Council shall be consulted on matters of general concern and importance to the parishes.
42. The Joint Council shall be consulted on any matter affecting the question of who should be licensed to minister in the Benefice (but shall not have any greater right to be consulted than individual PCCs within the Benefice).
43. The Joint Council may authorise the Treasurer to manage such funds as it directs.

Disputes and Ordering

44. Any dispute on any matter relating to Joint Council business shall be raised with the Chair in the first instance. Thereafter it shall be raised as necessary with the Archdeacon and the Bishop.
45. The Joint Council derives its powers under this Scheme, which may be varied or revoked subject to the provisions of the CRR 2025.

Property

46. This Scheme transfers only the property, rights and liabilities set out in Schedule 1 from Alcester PCC to the Joint Council.
47. This Scheme transfers only the property, rights and liabilities set out in Schedule 2 from Arrow with Weethley PCC to the Joint Council.
48. This Scheme transfers only the property, rights and liabilities set out in Schedule 3 from Coughton with Sambourne PCC to the Joint Council.
49. This Scheme transfers only the property, rights and liabilities set out in Schedule 4 from Haselor PCC to the Joint Council.
50. This Scheme transfers only the property, rights and liabilities set out in Schedule 5 from Kinwarton with Great Alne PCC to the Joint Council.
51. Any remaining assets held by the PCCs of the Parishes shall remain the property of the individual PCCs and shall not vest in the Joint Council on the date when this Scheme comes into effect.

Vesting of property

52. The legal title to any property transferred under the preceding provisions of this Scheme is, by virtue of those provisions, transferred in accordance with those provisions.

Variation and Revocation

53. This Scheme may be varied or revoked:

- (a) in accordance with the procedures set out in Rules M38(3), (4) and (5) of the 2025 Rules, in reliance on Rule 77; or
- (b) by the Bishop, in accordance with Rule M40 of the 2025 Rules, if any parish in the Joint Council ceases to be “connected” to the other parishes in the Joint Council, or a parish which is in a Joint Council is dissolved by a pastoral scheme.

Schedules of Property, assets, rights, contracts, insurance policies, bank accounts and liabilities to be transferred from the PCCs to the Joint Council

Schedule 1 – Alcester PCC

Contract of employment with the benefice administrator

Contract of employment with the benefice children and families worker

Schedule 2 – Arrow with Weethley PCC

None

Schedule 3 – Coughton with Sambourne PCC

None

Schedule 4 – Haselor PCC

None

Schedule 5 – Kinwarton with Great Alne PCC

None