

# The Parish Review Guide

## (A) Aims

1. To enable two parishes or communities to develop their opportunities under God to grow in mission by a twinned parish review.
2. To share good practice and new ideas across the diocese.
3. To build on strengths and address weaknesses in parish life.

## (B) Rationale

1. Paired reviews bring a fresh perspective into a parish or community's ongoing reflection about its life and work.
2. Such reflection becomes a systematic and regular aspect of community life when congregations link for each other's benefit.

## (C) Method and Process

1. A parish or community, the Receiving Community or RC, (after authorisation by the Parish Council) pairs with another parish or community, the Giving Community or GC. The GC may at another time pair up with a different community for its own benefit.
2. The GC through its Parish Council selects a Helper (who may or may not be its parish priest) in agreement with the RC Parish Council.
3. Both churches shall be informed in advance of the Review with at least 9 weeks' notice. The more people that are involved the better.

4. The RC prepares for the Review in the prescribed form and a Time Schedule (Appendix “B”) is drawn up for its completion by the agreed deadlines. All stages shall be completed in accordance with this Time Schedule and the Parish Review Guide.
5. The Parish Council shall appoint a Parish Review Working Group (PRWG) of 3 persons, one of whom shall be the Parish Priest, to organise the Parish Consultation and after that to prepare the draft Review Guide Questionnaire (RGQ) response.
6. The Council formally consults the parish members in the general terms of the 7 Key Areas covered by the RGQ in a Parish Consultation lasting two weeks. The PRWG shall determine the best method of soliciting the views of the whole parish.
7. During the period of the Parish Consultation the PRWG should also prepare an historical review of Parish History with statistical information, if available, ideally presented as a Time Line with the current position clearly shown. This should be included in the documentation presented to the Parish Council.
8. The RGQ itself is the responsibility of the Council only, served by the PRWG, (which reports to it), but also taking into consideration the views of parish members in the Parish Consultation. The PWRG has two weeks after the Parish Consultation to prepare the draft RGQ.
9. The PRWG delivers the Parish Consultation information, the Time Line historical analysis and the draft RGQ response to the Parish Council at least two weeks before it meets. The Council will then revise the RGQ and draw up the Plan of Action (PA).
10. All the documentation and supporting papers are sent in advance to the Helper at least two weeks before his visit for his Report and Comments.
11. The final stage of the Review is when the Helper visits the parish for the Parish Review Weekend. On the Saturday, the Council with the Helper will consider the Review as a whole and its Plan of Action with a view to implementation, monitoring and reporting back to the Council over specified but revisable time periods. At this extended meeting, the Helper will make his own Report and Comments on the Review to the Council, which may then decide to modify its Plan of Action or perhaps look at new areas for future development as suggested by the Helper.
12. The Parish Council with the Priest has the primary responsibility for implementation of the Plan of Action in accordance with episcopal guidance and instruction. The RGQ and the PA should be made available to the Bishop for his comments and guidance where appropriate.

## (D) The 7 Key Areas (in no particular order)

1. **BUILDINGS AND WORSHIP** - covering everything from the ordering of public worship to the use and design of buildings, the care, maintenance, augmentation and replacement of liturgical fittings including security issues. This section will also cover music and serving.
2. **MINISTRIES** - covering the recruitment by vocation and training of the clergy, choir, servers, Readers, lectors, catechists, visitors and other ministries. [NOTE: Parish Clergy, Parish Councillors and Administration Ministries are covered in the Parish Life section (6)].
3. **TEACHING** - covering the context of worship, the catechumenate, group and individual study. Resources and provision for teaching in different media and for different learning styles and ages, bookstores, libraries, courses - with or without certification.
4. **PASTORAL CARE** - covering the care for the people between themselves, including the clergy, age and gender related work if appropriate, including camps, holiday clubs, Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection issues, parish and sick visiting, bereavement care and chaplaincy work.
5. **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** - covering confession, spiritual parenting, facilitating personal prayer, study and action, retreats, quiet days and pilgrimages.
6. **PARISH LIFE** - covering social activities, parish conferences, Council and committee / working group organisation, parish administration (including such ministries as secretarial and treasurer training), the governance and care of the parish through the Council, parish finance, stewardship, missionary giving and support, the financing of clergy and workers' stipends, pensions and expenses.
7. **MISSION** - covering principles of and working practice in evangelisation (in context), media relations, community work, social witness, parish development strategies, Deanery / Regional and Diocesan Relations ecumenical relations with other local non-Orthodox churches and work with other local Orthodox communities.

## Appendix “B”

Week Number	Sunday Dates (week beginning)	Review Process  <i>(The Parish Council needs to have everything in place before the Review begins).</i>
1		Parish Consultation & Time Line
2		Parish Consultation & Time Line
3		Complete Review Guide Questionnaire
4		Complete Review Guide Questionnaire
5		Documents with Parish Council
6		Documents with Parish Council
7	<i>2 Parish Council meetings, the first to assess, the second to plan</i>	Parish Council Meets to (1) revise Review Guide Questionnaire and assess it in the light of the Parish Consultation and (2) prepare a draft Plan of Action
8		All Documents with the Helper for his Comments and Report
9		All Documents with Helper for his Comments and Report
10	<i>Parish Council meets for two Saturday 90 minute sessions in the late morning and afternoon</i>	Parish Review Weekend Helper delivers his Report and Comments to the Parish Council. Plan of Action amended and provisions made for implementation.

**NOTE:**

1. The **Parish Review Working Group** comprising the Parish Clergy, the Wardens and co options of those who have expertise to contribute to each of the 7 Key Areas will be responsible for the conduct of the Parish Consultation and the first completion of the Parish Review Questionnaire.
2. **The Helpers** will prepare all the **documentation** before the Review begins.