

Parish Review Repeal Ordinance 2009

Explanatory Report

Background

1. By resolution 12/07, the Synod resolved as follows –

“Consistent with resolution 26/06 passed by this Synod last year, and noting Standing Committee’s report on the matter at item 8.9 of its report to this session, Synod again –

 - (a) urges the filling of vacancies in the membership of the Parish Review Monitoring Panel and the rapid convening of that Panel, and
 - (b) requests the Panel to develop, and publish by 31 March 2008, guidelines as to the process and best practice for the conduct of parish reviews, along with a list of suitably trained, experienced and gifted review group facilitators and members, which it has accredited, and
 - (c) encourages every parish to undergo a development review utilising the terms of the Parish Development Review Ordinance 2001, within the next 5 years.”
2. In response to resolution 12/07, the Parish Review Monitoring Panel (the “Panel”) prepared a report about the implementation of development reviews under the Parish Development Review Ordinance 2001 which was received by the Standing Committee at its meeting on 31 March 2008.
3. In its report, the Panel made the following comments in relation to the demand and need for reviews –

“The members of the Panel judged that there was little enthusiasm at present for reviews among the majority of parish clergy. Since the passing of these Ordinances only one parish has requested a review under the terms of the Parish Development Review Ordinance 2001.

The reasons for this may be the general satisfaction with the level of activity and attainment under God in parishes that have a mission focus. There may also be a reticence about distracting the church for the period under which the review is taking place. Possibly there are concerns about the findings of a review, which could recommend different directions from those the parish is currently following. There is also a natural reticence to

accept peer review, especially when the benefits have not been demonstrated previously.

Because of the human resources, time and money required to set up the review process, to train facilitators and accredit review group members, the Panel believes that Standing Committee should decide whether the process should proceed.”

4. In order to test this matter, the Panel recommended that the Standing Committee should be asked to agree that, in spite of the current lack of demand for reviews, the Panel should proceed to develop guidelines and train and accredit facilitators and review group members.

5. At its meeting 25 May 2009, the Standing Committee declined to adopt this recommendation and instead requested that an ordinance be presented to the next meeting to repeal the Parish Development Review Ordinance 2001.

6. At its meeting on 29 June 2009, the Standing Committee requested that the bill for the Parish Review Repeal Ordinance 2009 be promoted to the Synod “by request of the Standing Committee”. At its meeting on 31 August 2009, the Standing Committee appointed a taskforce to recommend alternative approaches for encouraging a culture of review among our parishes and clergy, and for facilitating actual review mechanisms where parishes and clergy wish to request a review, with a view to such recommendations being provided to the Synod in 2010.

Repeal and consequential amendments

7. The primary purpose of the proposed ordinance is to repeal the Parish Development Review Ordinance 2001. However given that many of the provisions of the Parish Review (Monitoring) Panel Ordinance 2001 relate to the operation of the Parish Development Review Ordinance 2001, the proposed ordinance also –

- (a) repeals the Parish Review (Monitoring Panel) Ordinance 2001, and
- (b) amends the Parish Relationships Ordinance 2001 to ensure that relevant provisions from the repealed Parish Review (Monitoring Panel) Ordinance 2001 are appropriately retained.

8. The only other substantial matters dealt with by the proposed ordinance are –

- (a) to delete the definitions of “minister” and “parishioner” in clause 2 of the Parish Relationships Ordinance 2001 since these are already defined by reference to the Parish Administration Ordinance 2008, and

- (b) to clarify the wording which appears in clause 38(c) of the Parish Relationships Ordinance 2001 to make it clear that all 3 persons selected by the Panel as part of an Appeal Committee are to be selected from the Appeal Group rather than just the one member of the clergy.

Recommendation

- 9. The Standing Committee recommends that the Synod pass the bill as an ordinance.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

ROBERT WICKS
Diocesan Secretary

2 September 2009