

Measure achieves parliamentary approval and Royal Assent, it will pave the way for amendments to be made to the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015, such amendments having already been approved in principle by General Synod. In short, this will regularise current practice by allowing individual Chancellors to make Additional Matters Order[s] permitting the introduction of memorials conforming to certain types and categories (ideally with minimal difference between dioceses) provided they have the approval of parochial clergy under a prescribed process.

doi:10.1017/S0956618X24000401

Re St Nicholas, Leicester

Leicester Consistory Court: Gyane Ch, 7 February 2024
[2024] ECC Lei 2
Altar frontal—Progress Pride flag—‘sufficient interest’—Canon F2

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The church has a growing reputation as a safe place for LGBTQIA+ people of faith. In September 2022 it received a gift of an altar frontal in the form of the Progress Pride flag, which had been removed following a complaint from outside the diocese; the present petition was for a faculty to authorise its introduction.

Nine objections were received. In interlocutory decisions (reported as [2023] ECC Lei 1, [2023] ECC Lei 2 and [2023] ECC Lei 3), the court had decided that two objectors were ‘interested persons’ within the meaning of rule 10.1 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015. The petitioners objected to those two objectors retaining that status. One objection was dismissed. However, the other objector had resigned as a priest in the Church of England; and in the light of his failure to respond to the petitioners’ application to remove him as an objector, he was held to lack any reasonable concern in the matters to which the petition related, and the decision that he was an interested person was set aside.

In the context of the *Duffield* questions, the court agreed that the proposal could not be said to cause harm to the significance of the building. The ordinary presumption of things remaining as they are would therefore apply. The court considered the provisions of Canon F2 para 2:

The table, as becomes the table of the Lord, shall be kept in a sufficient and seemly manner, and from time to time repaired, and shall be covered in the

time of divine service with a covering of silk or other decent stuff, and with a fair white linen cloth at the time of the celebration of the Holy Communion.

While agreeing that the Progress Pride flag was a sign of welcome for people from the LGBTQIA+ community and was not a political symbol, it was a secular contemporary emblem and not a Christian emblem. The 'decent stuff' referred to in Canon F2 para 2 referred to material that was readily associated with ecclesiastical heritage that pointed towards, or maintained the focus on the celebration of the service of Holy Communion. It was clear that there was not a unified belief that the proposed altar frontal achieved the message of oneness in Christ which is part of the essence of the service of Holy Communion. The petition was on the basis of drawing to the communion table one group within the Anglican communion (albeit a marginalised one). It was therefore inherent in that objective that not all were represented in the design and the call to draw near. The petition was dismissed.

doi:10.1017/S0956618X24000413

Re St Bartholomew, Lower Sapey [2024] ECC Wor 3

Worcester Consistory Court: Humphreys Ch, 21 February 2024
 [2024] ECC Wor 3
Fonts – portable font – Canon F1

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As part of a petition for a wider faculty, the court considered proposals concerning a font. The Saxon stone font had originally been in Old St Bartholomew's Church, Lower Sapey, which was now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. It was proposed to move it back to that church, because its location was said to limit the flexibility of the west end of the church and was a trip hazard. Its removal would cause serious harm to the significance of the church as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

The proposed replacement was a portable font. This would take the form of a copper 'Victorian' or 'Victorian style' bowl with two handles, said by the court to look like a relatively attractive kitchen mixing bowl. This would stand on an existing metal stand (otherwise used as a flower stand) or an existing wooden stand of uncertain provenance.

Canon F1 provides:

'1. In every church and chapel where baptism is to be administered, there shall be provided a decent font with a cover for the keeping clean thereof.