In the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Winchester

**Directions concerning public notice during the Covid-19 Health Crisis**

Following the closure of places of worship and Government directions to stay at home wherever possible it has become increasingly difficult to comply with the conditions for public notice under the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015.

The overriding objective of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules is that the court must deal with cases justly which includes ensuring that all parties are on an equal footing and that each case is dealt with in ways that are proportionate to the importance of the case, the complexity of the issues and they are dealt with expeditiously and fairly. Bringing applications to the notice of the public is an important part of ensuring this fairness, but adjustments are required to the usual requirements in the current circumstances.

Under Rule 6.7 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013, I am satisfied that the current circumstances mean that it would not be expedient to require the normal giving of public notices (rules 6.1 to 6.6). However, the following directions will apply until further notice instead.

1. I dispense with the requirement of displaying a public notice WITHIN the church in relation to any faculty petition submitted on or after 23 March 2020. Any public notice is only required to be displayed OUTSIDE the church, but subject to the following points.
2. Any public notice displayed OUTSIDE the church must remain on display until the COMPLETION of the works or until 28 days after the requirement to remain at home has been removed, whichever is sooner. The Registry will alert any relevant parties when it is deemed that the requirement to remain at home has been lifted sufficiently to trigger the start of the 28 day period mentioned herein;
3. Efforts must be made to publicise the works in other ways so that as much notice of proposed works is given to as many parishioners as possible. Publication should include, where possible:
   1. posting on the parish and/or benefice website,
   2. posting on social media pages,
   3. an email to the worshipping community,
   4. inclusion in any hardcopy or electronic newsletter circulating within the local community.

Petitioners are required to file with the Diocesan Registry written confirmation of the steps taken to bring the petition to the attention of all parishioners (not just churchgoers) when the petition is submitted to the Registry.

1. The petitioners must confirm that they are not aware of any objections that might have been received were it not for the current health emergency. If petitioners are aware of potential objections then details must be provided to the Court.
2. Any objections received at the Diocesan Registry, even those received outside the standard 28 day notice period, may be taken into account by the Court until such times as the works have been completed or until 28 days after the date referred to in paragraph 2 above.
3. Power is reserved to the Consistory Court to require the publication of any further public notice if, on considering the petition, the Chancellor or the Deputy Chancellor take the view that any such further public notice or indeed other publicity is desirable in the interests of public justice. This is most likely to be necessary if the petition is likely to be controversial in nature.

In cases of doubt enquiries may be made of the Diocesan Registry.

Given the general guidance nationally that any non-essential works should not be undertaken at this time, any faculty permission granted does not give the petitioners authority to disregard any national guidance from the Archbishops or the Government.

Cain Ormondroyd

Chancellor of the Diocese of Winchester 14April 2020