



BETTER TOGETHER:

**REIMAGINING ANGLICAN IDENTITY AND
MISSION IN THE HEART OF IPSWICH**

Introduction

In July this year, the North Ipswich Parish Council adopted a proposal to form a single new ministry unit that combines the existing parish of North Ipswich and the parish of Ipswich.

This proposal had been under discussion by their PC for a couple of months, as part of their own Mission Action Plan process. Both sets of Wardens met with Bishop Cam when he was here on 4 August to discuss how such a proposal might be put into action.

The August meeting of the Ipswich Parish Council unanimously gave in-principle support for the formation of a single new ministry unit, comprised initially of the existing parishes of Ipswich and North Ipswich.

The regional Bishop has been formally advised that this proposal has the support of both parishes and he has set the times for separate Special Meetings of parishioners on Tuesday, 1 October: 6.00pm at St Thomas' Church and 7.30pm at St Paul's Church.

In preparation for those meetings, this paper offers additional information about the proposal and some of the practical matters required for its implementation. It also sets out a theological and missional perspective, based on the view that we are "better together" rather than acting separately.

This proposal from the Parish of North Ipswich is the culmination of a long process of collaboration between our two parishes and, for a while, the Parish of Booval. It represents a revival of the Ipswich Anglican Community project and the intention is that we develop this concept in such a way that other existing parishes within the City of Ipswich might choose to join at a later date

If approved by both parishes the concept will be considered by Diocesan Council which has the power to modify parish boundaries and create new parishes.

If agreed by all parties, the new ministry unit could be created as early as 1 December (Advent Sunday) 2024.

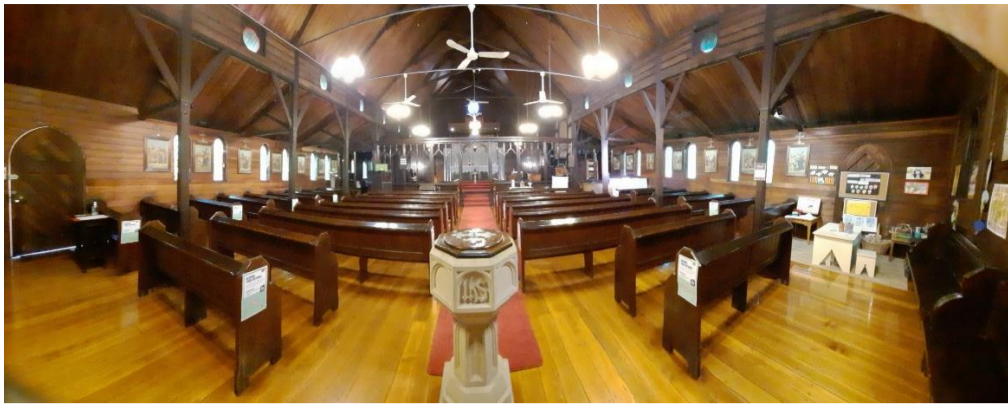
St Thomas' and St Paul's A Strengths-based Analysis:

Existing collaboration between the two parishes and the Benefits of a New Ministry Unit – Better Together

The following page is an analysis of the strengths that each parish brings to the Anglican presence in Ipswich. It also provides a snapshot model of the possibilities that a new ministry unit might bring when it combines those strengths. At the very least, combining the two parishes open these possibilities:

- Single unified mission action plan
- Unified Anglican presence in the heart of Ipswich
- Bible study and discipleship programs
- Diversity of worship styles across different Sunday services
- Consolidated financial accounts
- Eliminate duplication for some costs (e.g., copyright licences)
- Reduced administrative burden on St Thomas' Church
- Fewer people needed to fill canonical roles such as Churchwardens, Parish Nominators, Synod representatives and Parish Council
- The various Dinka congregations might be members of Ipswich Anglican Community rather than simply being a congregation at St Paul's Church or at Raceview

Look at the following page and dream big.



St Thomas' Community Strengths

- Suburban church with a locally based community
- Associate priest (shared with St Paul's community)
- Physical infrastructure, including,
 - Historic, pleasant and welcoming church building
 - Hall
 - Landscaped and useable land space
 - Cemetery (Pine Mountain)
- Cemetery management
- Strong focus on family and children's ministry, including baptism and confirmation
- Traditional communion service
- Messy church
- Community markets
- Strong relationship with the local primary school
- GFS affiliation
- Values and embraces diversity within the congregation
- Valued venue for community groups to meet
- Embraces the possibilities of small group activity, including
 - "New monasticism"
 - Young people's worship
 - Lay-developed and led workshops
- Strong interest in lay development/education and lay-led ministry opportunities
- Mature-age support group
- Aged Care pastoral focus (also present at St Paul's)
- Religious Instruction at primary schools
- Events planning and management
- Strong music focus



St Paul's Community Strengths

- City church with a diverse community, including vibrant South Sudanese parish
- Location in the centre of Ipswich at the top of the mall
- Active involvement/collaboration in city-wide festival activities
- Physical infrastructure, including,
 - Historic, impressive church building and offices, with historic links to local families
 - Large hall (about to be refurbished)
 - Landscaped heritage garden that is valued by some CBD Ipswich community members as a place for peaceful reflection
 - Community garden at decommissioned church, Basin Pocket) that is valued by the local community and used as a practice venue for a local band
- Administrative centre
- Strong and diverse liturgical offering, including,
 - Traditional communion services (morning)
 - Contemporary service (1 monthly, evening)
 - Taizé communion service (2 monthly, evening)
 - Evensong (1 monthly)
 - South Sudanese (Dinka) worship (afternoon)
- Strong musical offering, including
 - Choir
 - Historic organ
 - Highly valued venue for community concerts
 - South Sudanese (Dinka) youth choir and dance group
- Strong culture of learning and development
- Diverse and highly skilled lay and clerical skillset
- Skilled and experienced lay volunteers and leadership; strong pastoral focus, especially for older members
- Strong baptism and family engagement program
- Social outreach program, including
 - Locus for food ministry and social services provided by outside agencies (Rosies, 4 Seasons, vet services)
 - Highly valued Op Shop
- Support Centre at the Annex
- Archives
- Mother's Union
- Men's fellowship
- Values and embraces diversity within the congregation
- Full-time Rector and Associate Priest, with honorary deacon
- Informal associations with St Francis college (students and teaching)
- Strong financial base
- Memorial gardens

A Coat of Many Colours: Shared Strengths in a New Ministry Unit

A combination of centres that is dedicated to a diversity of experience and is dynamic in many and varied ways:

- Diverse liturgical offerings, including South Sudanese (Dinka) worship and Sunday evening alternative worship opportunities; Messy church; willingness to experiment with alternative and specialised forms of community worship
- Community experiences (arts, craft, sacred, celebration, memorial) and social outreach; markets; gardens
- Education and personal spiritual development opportunities
- Diverse congregation membership
- Experienced clergy
- Anglican perspectives on Christian walking through life
- Outreach activities, including social support for
 - Families and others experiencing hardship
 - Women-specific ministries/initiatives (MU, GFS)
 - Men-specific (fellowship activities)
 - Social isolation
 - Community Op Shop that is volunteer-driven and organised
- Strong and growing emphasis on general family ministry including baptism and confirmation. with developing skillsets
- Decentralised venues for community use and outreach
- Cemetery and memorial gardens
- Strong financial base
- Strong interest in lay development/education and lay-led ministry opportunities

What will it Look Like and How will We Get There?

Transitional arrangements for a united parish (2025/2029)

A new Ministry Unit with two parish centres calls for adjustment in our current structures. We won't change what the Canons allow us to do, but we will be flexible in how we apply them in our organisation structures.

At our first AGM, we propose that our elections will include the following features:

- At least one of the 3 Churchwardens to be from St Thomas' Church
- At least one third of the Parish Council to be from St Thomas' Church
- At least one of the Synod Representatives to be from St Thomas' Church
- At least one of the 3 Parish Nominators to be from St Thomas' Church

Have a look at the models presented on the following pages and consider the implications.

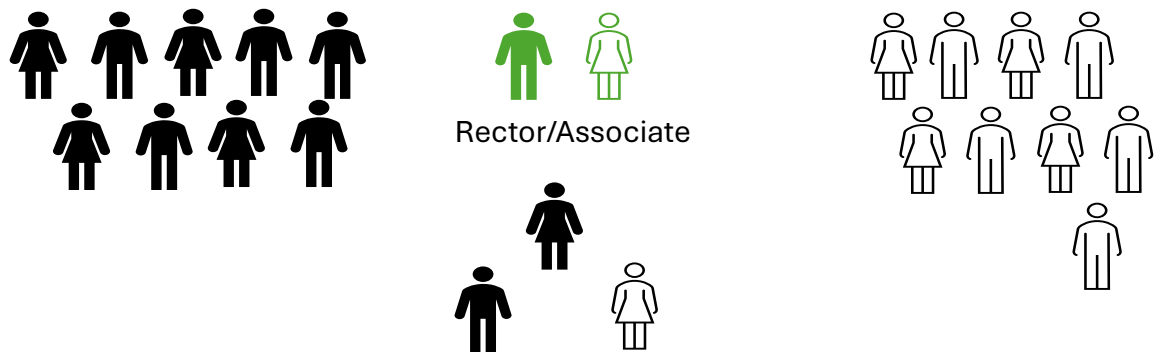
Churchwardens

Our Canons provide the following:

► **Churchwardens**

- 33. (1) In every Parish there shall be either two or three Churchwardens, each of whom shall be an Elector, and none of whom shall be a Member of the Clergy or a Stipendiary Lay Minister. *PAR-20-2013 Parishes Regulation Canon*
- (2) One Churchwarden shall be appointed annually by the Parish Priest.
- (3) If in any year the Parish Priest shall fail to appoint a Churchwarden by 15 March, or if the cure of souls in the Parish be vacant at the time fixed for the Annual Meeting, the Archbishop shall appoint a fit and qualified person to be a Churchwarden.
- (4) At each Annual Meeting, the Electors shall determine by resolution whether the number of Churchwardens to be elected by them shall be one or two, and the Electors shall then proceed to elect the number of Churchwardens so determined.

We propose three (3) wardens: one elected from each of the parishes and one appointed from either parish by the Rector.

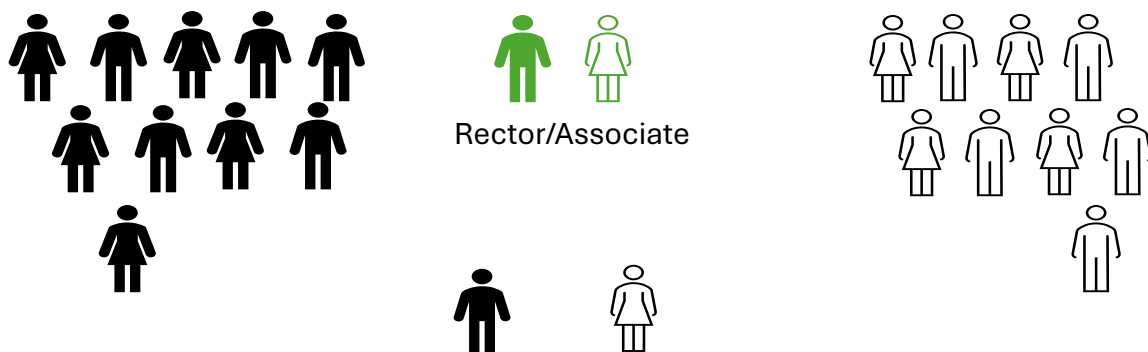


Synod Representatives

Our Canons provide the following:

- ▶ **Synod Representatives**
- ▶ 34. (1) The Annual Meeting in a year required by the Synod Canon of each Parish shall, by its Electors, elect two lay persons who are Electors to represent the Parish in Synod.
- ▶ (2) The persons so elected, if not already members of the Parish Council, shall by such election become members of the Parish Council.

We propose one (1) Synod Representative be elected from each parish community. But this is not to be a hard and fast rule. We recognise that Synod representation is as much a matter of interest as it is a responsibility in the life of our church. If there is no interest in Synod representation within one community, both representatives may be elected from the other community. Whoever is elected, their responsibility will be to represent the interests of the combined ministry unit first and foremost.



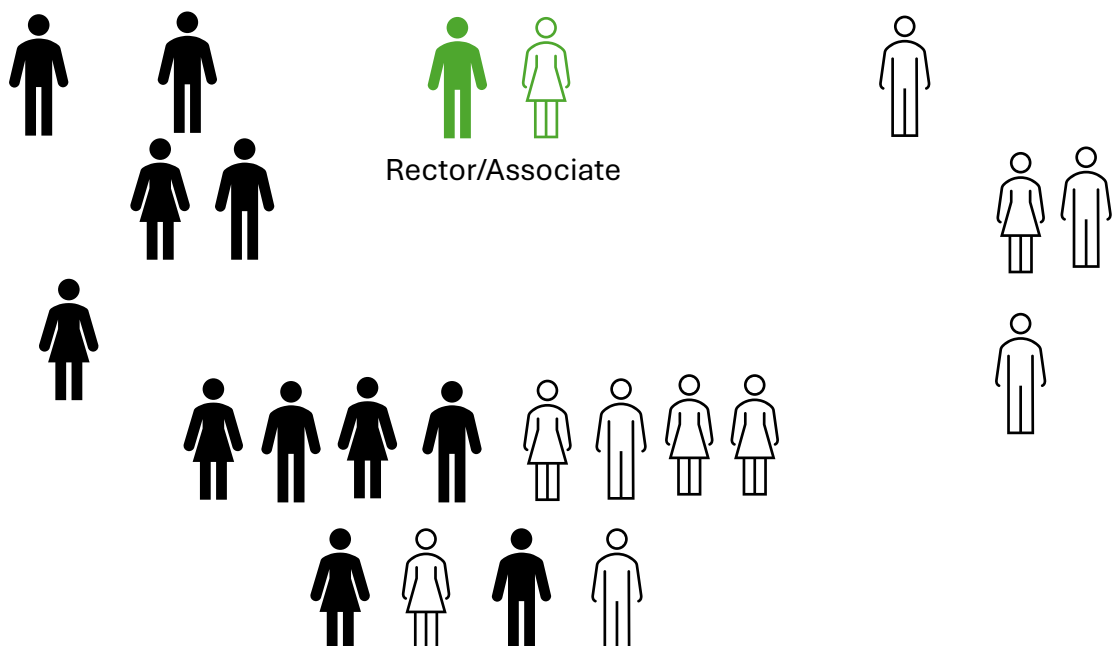
Parish Council

Our Canons provide the following:

► **Members of the Parish Council**

- 37. (1) The Parish Priest may at any time appoint to be members of the Parish Council any Assistant Curate and Stipendiary Lay Minister appointed to the Parish by the Archbishop, to hold office until the next Annual Meeting.
- (2) Apart from members ex officio or by appointment by the Parish Priest as aforesaid, the Electors at the Annual Meeting shall determine the number, not exceeding twenty-one, of additional members of the Parish Council (hereinafter called "Councillors").
- (3) The Parish Priest may at any time appoint persons who are Electors as Councillors, up to one-third of the number determined at the Annual Meeting as aforesaid.
Parishes Regulation Canon PAR-21-2013
- (4) The Electors shall at the Annual Meeting elect two-thirds of the number determined by them at the Annual Meeting as aforesaid, as Councillors, such persons being Electors, and not being Members of the Clergy or Stipendiary Lay Ministers.

We propose twelve (12) parish councillors, four (4) elected from each of the parish communities and four (4) appointed by the Rector.

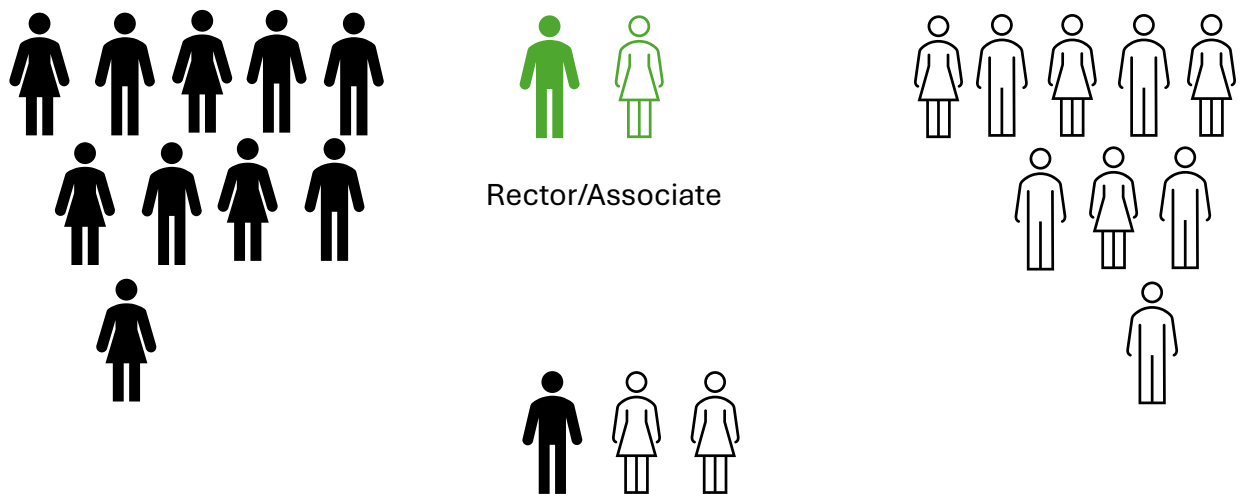


Parish Nominators

Our Canons provide the following:

- **Parish Nominators**
- 38. (1) In every Parish which is a Benefice there shall be, and in any other Parish there may be, three Parish Nominators.
- (2) The Electors at the Annual Meeting shall elect persons who are Electors (not being Members of the Clergy or Stipendiary Lay Ministers) to be Parish Nominators.
- (3) The persons so elected, if not already members of the Parish Council, shall by such election become members of the Parish Council.

We propose three (3) Parish nominators, one elected from each parish community and the third elected from either parish community as the electors see fit.



An Integrated Approach: Development of a Fresh Mission Action Plan (MAP)

With the formation of a new ministry unit comes the opportunity and obligation to develop a fresh Mission Action Plan. Amongst other things, a Mission Action Plan is necessary to unlock the potential of our financial assets and it unlocks our potential to be a vibrant and effective Anglican presence in Ipswich.

Area			
Activity 1			
Activity 2			
Activity 3			

Area			
Activity 1			
Activity 2			
Activity 3			

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Activity 1			
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Area			
Activity 1			
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Activity 3			

Voting on the Proposal and Next Steps

At the end of the meeting, you and your fellow parishioners will be asked to consider what has been presented in this document and by what your leadership teams and Bishop Cam have had to say. You will be asked to vote either **YES** or **NO** to the proposal.

The parish community of St Thomas will meet first and vote on the matter. If the vote is **YES**, a further meeting will be held with the community of St Paul's to hear their views. Each meeting will be discreet and only include enrolled electors from the parish. If the vote at St Paul's is **YES**, the process will progress to the next level.

If the majority of **either** community votes **NO** to the proposal, the matter will conclude and will not proceed, even if the majority of the other community votes **YES**. This matter **MUST** be agreed in the majority by **both parish communities** to succeed and proceed.

Next Steps

If the motion is approved by both parish communities, Bishop Cam will take the proposal to Diocesan Council for discussion and approval. Both parish communities will be notified of the result of that discussion in a timely manner so that further discussion amongst the Churchwardens can take place. If the determination of Diocesan Council is positive, discussion of an appropriate date will form part of further discussions with Bishop Cam in due course.