

**REPORT TO 2013 SYNOD  
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS ORDINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

At the second session of the 50<sup>th</sup> Synod held in October 2012, Synod resolved to form a committee to review the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012. The Committee was to consist of a chair and two members appointed by the Bishop; Synod also appointed the Rev'd Canon Katherine Bowyer, Mrs Sue Williams, Mr Rod Berry and the Rev'd Dr Keith Joseph to the committee. In December 2012 Bishop Brian appointed the Rev'd Michael Birch and Mr John Cleary to the committee, and asked Dr Joseph to chair the committee.

The committee is required to present a full report to Synod in 2014. This report therefore is simply an interim report to acquaint members of Synod with the activities of the committee appointed by them last year.

The committee has been meeting monthly since the start of the year. The Rev'd Michael Birch and Mr John Cleary have withdrawn from the committee, leaving the committee as the Rev'd Canon Katherine Bowyer, Mrs Sue Williams, Mr Rod Berry and the Rev'd Dr Keith Joseph (chair).

Activities so far have centred around a review of the relevant legislation and codes relating to Professional Standards in the Diocese of Newcastle. These documents are:

- Professional Standards Ordinance 2012
- Offences Canon 1962
- Clergy Discipline Ordinance 1996
- Clergy Ministry Ordinance 2009
- Faithfulness in Service
- Professional Standards Protocol 2013

The Committee has identified that the above regime of Ordinances provides in some respects different and at times contradictory processes to deal with the same allegations, and that there are procedural gaps in some documents which may reflect an evolution in the understanding of professional standards issues over the period that these documents have been developed. The Committee also has concerns that the regime of Ordinances is unnecessarily complicated, thereby diluting its intelligibility and transparency to all. The Committee is inclined to the view that the Professional Standards Ordinance can be strengthened by remedying overlaps and gaps, and is aiming to have its recommendations on these issues ready for presentation to Diocesan Council by February 2014.

We also acknowledge the ready assistance and help of Bishop Peter Stuart, Mr John Cleary, and all the Diocesan staff in providing the committee with all the documents it has requested, and in otherwise facilitating the work of the committee.



The Rev'd Dr Keith Joseph  
Chair