

IN THE DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL OF THE CHURCH IN WALES

**IN THE MATTER OF A COMPLAINT AGAINST THE REVEREND RYAN FOREY
("The Respondent")**

ON REFERRAL FROM THE BISHOP OF LLANDAFF

JUDGMENT

1. The Respondent was at the time covered by the Charge a Cleric who held a licence granted by a Bishop of the Church in Wales and was in receipt of an emolument or other financial benefit from the Church in Wales.
2. The Charge, dated the 17th of April 2025, alleges that at the relevant time the Respondent was guilty of conduct giving just cause for scandal or offence, and of wilful disobedience to or breach of the provisions of the Constitution or of the statement of Terms of Service published pursuant to the Clergy Terms of Service Canon 2010, contrary to chapter IX paragraph 9 (c) and 9(d) of the Constitution of the Church in Wales ("The Constitution") during the period 2020- 2024.
3. The Respondent faces three distinct allegations. The Charge as prepared by the Proctor is attached in full to this judgment at Annex B, but the three elements can be summarised as follows:
 - a) Between October 2020 and February 2024, whilst chair of charitable trustees of the Parochial Church Council of Saint Teilo's Church Cardiff (Citizen Church) he did authorise, instruct or make payments to himself and his wife, namely (a) payments of £300 per month in lieu of fees for parochial fees for occasional office services which were not conducted and (b) £500 per month "clergy spouse" payments – from PCC funds and thereby he obtained benefit(s) that were not reimbursement for legitimate expenses and were made otherwise than in accordance with the governing documents of the said charity.
 - b) Between February 2023 and March 2023, the respondent whilst the vicar of Citizen Church did allow to be used the Citizen App (a mobile electronic application) which did display the names of children attending the church to other users of the App contrary to Article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation SI 2016/679 and safeguarding best practice, knowing that the names were so displayed to users.

- c) The Respondent whilst the vicar of Citizen Church did establish a church outside the Church in Wales known as Be Church, Cardiff, and held or accepted the position of pastor without the consent of his Bishop.
4. The Proctor who brings the Charge is Peter Saville of Counsel and the Respondent is represented by Rory Gordon of Counsel, instructed by Rev. Stephen Coleman, Solicitor of Birketts LLP.
 5. The original referral to the Tribunal included other matters of concern to the Bishop. The Preliminary Stage of the Tribunal found no case to answer in relation to some of these matters, and the Proctor declined to file charges in relation to some others, following his assessment that there was no realistic possibility of him securing an adverse disciplinary finding on those matters. We do not detail these matters; for the avoidance of doubt no disciplinary finding is made against the Respondent other than in relation to the matters specifically set out in the Charge.
 6. The Respondent has admitted all of the allegations set out in the Charge.
 7. A Directions hearing was held on 26th June 2025, attended by the Proctor and Mr Coleman, when it was agreed by all parties that the final hearing could be held by way of written submissions from the parties, with the Panel meeting via video-conference to consider them. Ahead of that, the advocates would seek to narrow the issues and edit the documentation that we would need to consider at the hearing. Consequential directions were accordingly made. We should express our gratitude to the advocates for their assistance to us which has resulted in the minimum delay possible in disposing of the matter. We have received detailed written submissions as to penalty from both.
 8. Accordingly, the Panel met at a hearing without parties or their representatives present, in order to consider the written submissions on the 22nd July 2025. We indicated to the Parties that we would announce our decision as to penalty as quickly as possible after the hearing, but that the written reasons would follow thereafter. A draft penalty was sent to the Parties on the 24th July.
 9. The draft penalty was accompanied by the following statement: *“This draft sentence is confidential until publication of the full Judgment and reasons. It shall be distributed to the Proctor, Respondent and the referring Bishop. Further distribution prior to publication of the full judgment requires the permission of the Tribunal.”* The Respondent, via his solicitor requested permission to disclose the penalty *“to some Church of England bishops as*

soon as possible so he can discuss the ability to move on". The Registrar approved this request.

10. It came to the attention of, and was a matter of considerable alarm to, the Tribunal that the Respondent, seemingly in blatant disregard of the clear wording set out above, sent at least one email to a church leader (not a Bishop) containing details of the penalty prior to this judgment being finalised. This is, to our mind, a clear breach of the terms set out by the Tribunal.
11. The Chair accordingly invited further submissions from the Proctor and Respondent on what, if any, further action was appropriate. The Proctor's submission suggested either a reconvening of the Hearing to take formal evidence on these matters, or a standalone further disciplinary tribunal referral, may be appropriate. In a short submission from his solicitor, the Respondent indicated that he had not fully understood the confidentiality restrictions. He indicated a willingness to apologise for sending the email and offered to check the content of future emails with the Registrar of the Tribunal before sending them.
12. As concerning as the breach of confidentiality was, perhaps even more concerningly the email contained a number of inaccurate assertions about the process and procedure adopted, including a suggestion that the Bishop of Llandaff had interfered in the process late in the day, leading to a more severe penalty being imposed than had (the Respondent asserts) previously been agreed.
13. This is inaccurate. At the Directions Hearing, the Tribunal invited submissions from the Proctor and the Respondent as to an appropriate penalty. The Proctor, entirely reasonably, sought the view of the Bishop of the Diocese in which this misconduct occurred as to what sort of penalty she might think appropriate, to assist him in consideration of the issues and preparation of his submissions. However, in the Disciplinary system of the Church in Wales the Proctor does not act on the instructions of the referring Bishop and exercises his or her professional judgment and discretion in making submissions. The only body competent to agree and impose a penalty is this Tribunal, which did not meet to consider the evidence and submissions until the 22nd July. The Registrar has made enquiries of the Proctor, who has confirmed that he at no stage had agreed with the Respondent's solicitor or counsel a joint submission on appropriate penalty. In short, there was no agreed penalty.
14. The email also asserted that the findings of the Tribunal (which had not been finalised or published when he sent the email) contained '*no safeguarding concerns*' and '*no questions about [Mr Forey's] leadership*'. Again we consider

this inaccurate and misleading. The Proctor's case, and our findings (set out in detail below) demonstrate safeguarding concerns in relation to the Citizen App, which had the potential to put children at risk of harm. All the charges intrinsically raise questions about the Respondent's leadership.

- 15.** A majority of the Panel¹ reconvened on 14 August 2025 to consider the submissions made, and determine what further action if any was appropriate. After considerable reflection, the Tribunal has decided not to reconvene a hearing, nor to advise the Bishop to make a fresh referral to the Tribunal. We are concerned that this episode presents another example of the Respondent's difficulty in complying with rules and direction, and further demonstrates the need for careful supervision and support before he should be considered for a leadership position in the Church. However, the Tribunal concluded that the matter was unlikely to lead to it imposing a substantially different penalty to the one it had already circulated in draft and therefore further proceedings would not be proportionate in the circumstances. In light of the submissions, we have made minor changes to the penalty circulated to the parties in draft.
- 16.** It is clear from recent communications that Mr Forey seeks to continue his ordained ministry in the Church of England. We note that such a breach of an order of a Clergy Discipline Tribunal in the Church of England would likely be considered a contempt of court, which could be referred to the High Court of England & Wales for enforcement. The disestablished nature of the Church in Wales and its Courts & Tribunals precludes such a step being taken here. However, we have amended paragraph 6 of the Penalty to require that any Bishop seeking a reference or Clergy Current Status Letter for the Respondent be provided with a full copy of this judgment, to ensure that they are fully apprised of the admitted misconduct, the penalty, and the concerns raised by the Tribunal over the Respondent's conduct in the days running up to the handing down of this judgment.

THE BACKGROUND LEADING TO THE HEARING

- 17.** The Respondent has admitted 3 allegations in respect of his leadership and administration of Citizen Church over a period of four years. He moved to Wales in early 2020, after Ordination as Deacon in the Diocese of Portsmouth at Petertide 2019. He was ordained Priest in Llandaff Cathedral on the 28th of

¹ Archdeacon Davies was unable to attend this additional meeting due to holiday. Given the Respondent's request for these matters to be dealt with as quickly as possible, the remaining members of the Panel (which represents a majority of the Panel) decided to proceed and were unanimous in their conclusions.

June 2020. On the 6th of July 2020 he was licensed as the priest in charge of Citizen Church by the then Bishop of Llandaff, and became vicar on 1 January 2022. On the 27th of October 2022 he was certified by the Bishop as having completed his curacy directly under her supervision, whilst in post as vicar of Citizen Church. On the 22nd of December 2023 it was proposed he go on voluntary 6-month study leave. That suggestion was accepted by him on the 15th of January 2024, and he never returned to his substantive role - on the 18th of April 2024 he resigned his post on three months' notice, leaving office on the 18th of July 2024. He has not held a ministerial role in the Church in Wales since that date.

- 18.** The Proctor submits that the Charges concern admitted conduct which amount to significant failings made by the Respondent as priest in charge and vicar, which have had a reputational impact to the church and to the integrity of the office of a priest, in addition to a consequent personal effect on congregants and staff members. Failings occurred at staging posts throughout the Respondent's leadership and the payments were made over a prolonged period; the distribution of serious incidents raises concerns about the degree of risk for any future re occurrence.
- 19.** The Proctor accepts that there is substantial mitigation relating to the matters which give rise to these proceedings. There is no doubt that the Respondent is a talented and charismatic young priest who was operating in exceptional conditions. He was asked to move to Wales during his final year in training and actually moved very shortly after diaconal ordination. He was appointed priest in charge of a congregation a week after ordination as a priest. He therefore missed the structured support of a formal curacy, essentially because he was placed by the former Bishop of Llandaff immediately into an incumbency-level post. His early ministry was during the COVID pandemic which must have limited opportunities for oversight and mentoring further. As a newly-planted church with a largely young congregation, the Parochial Church Council he chaired were similarly inexperienced in the day-to-day running of the Church in Wales parish and the charitable obligations which accompany this.
- 20.** All parties agree that it is entirely possible for the Respondent to return to ministry if the right support were in place. We have no doubt that the absence of appropriate structured support to him in his role at Citizen Church contributed significantly to the reasons why he appears before us today. However, even making allowance for such failings of supervision, support and mentoring, we find that the Respondent was prepared to ignore the rules to which he was subject and pursued courses of action which he should have realised would have brought the Church in Wales into disrepute and, as

regards the first and third Charge, were breaches of the Constitution and/or Clergy Terms of Service.

THE CHARGES

- 21.** The first Charge relates to improper financial payments which the Respondent made to himself and to his wife. Between October 2020 and February 2024 when he was the chair of charitable trustees of the PCC of Citizen Church, payments were made to himself or his household that were not reimbursement for legitimate expenses and were not permitted under the governing documents of the PCC or the Constitution of the Church in Wales. He authorised monthly payments of £300 to himself and the clergy team in lieu of occasional office fees for services that the team did not conduct. The justification for this was that the nature of Citizen Church and its congregation meant the clergy did not conduct many marriages burials etc and therefore they did not receive the fees that ordinarily they would have if ministering in a more traditional parish context. He arranged a further £500 per month to be paid to his wife as a 'clergy spouse allowance'. Such conduct was conduct giving just cause for scandal or offence and represents a breach of the provision of the Constitution and/or of the Clergy Terms of Service.
- 22.** The second Charge relates to the time when the Respondent, as vicar, arranged for the development of a mobile application which contained several functions. One function was for signing into events at the church and was used by the children's team for children who attended services and events. Concerns were raised during the app's development that the app did not comply with GDPR requirements and on launch it was found to display the names of users, including children (and including looked-after children) to all other users when signing in. Despite concerns about the safeguarding risk and noncompliance of the GDPR being raised with the respondent, the app was used between February 2023 and March 2023. The Respondent declined to take the app down as he said it would be a backward step for Citizen. The Charge in relation to these matters is brought on the basis of conduct giving just cause for scandal or offence.
- 23.** The third Charge Relates to the Respondent assuming the role of Pastor of a 'breakaway' church formed by him from within the staff and members of Citizen with the intention or objective of continuing his ministry outside the Church in Wales and Anglican Communion. He took deliberate steps in preparation for seceding from the Church in Wales whilst he was still in post as vicar of Citizen. Following his resignation the community he founded outside the Church in Wales briefly began to meet as "Be Church" Cardiff.

- 24.** The Respondent had a difficult meeting with the present Bishop of Llandaff on the 12th of January 2024. On the same day inquired about booking event spaces with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (a venue outside the Respondent's Parish) which the Tribunal finds was to be for Be Church, a Church not under the authority of the Church in Wales. These events give rise to the Charge being based upon the Respondent's conduct giving just cause for scandal or offence and as a breach of the provision of the Constitution and of the Clergy Terms of Service.
- 25.** The Respondent in his submissions to us says that he authorised the payments covered by the first Charge out of a genuine, albeit misguided belief that they were permissible, having seen similar practises used in previous churches he had worked at prior to ordination with no objection. These payments were never concealed and were recorded in Citizen's budgets which were approved annually by the PCC. He accepts however that the arrangements should have been subject to clearer governance and external advice and regrets any adverse impact these decisions have had on Citizen and the Church in Wales more broadly.
- 26.** As to the second charge he takes full responsibility for allowing the use of the app and accept that as vicar, he bears ultimate responsibility for the issues that resulted. The primary function of the app was a communication tool and the ability to sign in children was secondary. He accepts that when he was spoken to about the data privacy issue, his response may have come across as dismissive. He says that this was a particularly difficult time for him given his wife was suffering a miscarriage around this time. Once a member of staff had made a commitment to the PCC that the sign in process for children would be made private or the feature would be taken down until it was fit for purpose, safe and confidential, the Respondent instructed that the use of the sign in feature be discontinued shortly thereafter, thereby limiting the harm arising from the misconduct.
- 27.** The Respondent says that the setting up of a church outside the Church in Wales was an action born out of hurt, vulnerability, and a crisis of faith in his future in the Anglican Communion. He cites ambiguity surrounding the accusations made against him, a lack of clarity and support from church leadership, and the nature of personal criticisms directed to him. He suffered from untreated ADHD and felt that establishing an independent church would enable him better to continue his ministry. He accepts he was wrong and is now determined to pursue his ministry within the Anglican Communion.

THE LEGAL PRINCIPLES

- 28.** The standard of proof that applies to proceedings in this Tribunal is the civil standard, the balance of probability. In this case the charges are admitted.
- 29.** We follow the guidance of the Provincial Court of the Church in Wales in the matter of the Reverend Clifford Smith Williams (1 November 1997) In relation to what constitutes conduct giving just cause for scandal and offence. We accept the test is in part theological and in part a matter of fact. For such conduct to be found, there must be a course of conduct knowingly entered upon by the Respondent, the course of conduct must, in the eyes of the Church, be judged to be inherently wrong and the course of conduct must bring such discredit upon the Respondent and the Church that, in the eyes of a person of reasonably robust persuasion, such a person would describe it as scandalous or offensive. We remind ourselves that the Respondent has been represented by lawyers well versed in ecclesiastical law and that, when he admitted the Charges, he would have been aware of the tests that we apply.

OUR FINDINGS

- 30.** We accept that the Respondent took responsibilities in Citizen Church for which he had not been adequately prepared and during which his support, supervision and guidance were significantly absent. We do, however, detect in the initial responses that we have before us an element of arrogance and a readiness to minimise his own failings. In particular he seemed so focused on driving the development of the Citizen Church that he ignored the reservations of those around him about the app and the safeguarding issues that arose from it. He felt that he could deal with the financial arrangements in breach of the requirements of Charity Law and have seen evidence he was prepared to sideline the PCC to pursue what he thought was right. We find that he was prepared to seek to set up an alternative Church and the evidence persuades us that he was at least party to attempts to persuade members of the Citizen congregation to leave the Church in Wales and join the Church he was setting up. He went behind the back of the Church in Wales hierarchy and did not seek to discuss his concerns about the direction of his ministry with persons within the Church in Wales who would have explored his concerns. The fact that the Church may not have provided him with appropriate mentoring and supervision does not mean that there was no one in place whom he could have consulted or asked for advice which, if followed, could have spared him from appearance before this Tribunal.
- 31.** Notwithstanding our findings, we accept that once properly guided and supervised, as he would have been if he had experienced a traditional curacy,

there is no reason for him not to develop his ministry and be a considerable asset to the Church in Wales or another church within the Anglican Communion. Before this can happen, however, we regard it as essential that he is able to demonstrate that he can show an understanding and commitment to the requirements of ordained Anglican ministry and to the role of a charitable trustee which necessarily accompanies that ministry in the Church in Wales.

- 32.** We accept the submissions of both parties that the correct penalty is a monition, subject to conditions. The Proctor's submissions set out his view that such conditions should include a restriction preventing the Respondent holding an incumbent-level position until certain training and competencies can be demonstrated and certified by an experienced supervisor. Submissions on behalf of the Respondent suggest that this would be unnecessary. Although we note the efforts the Respondent has made to acquire the necessary understandings and competencies, we find that his request that he can be authorised to resume a full ministry and acquire the skills required "on the job" displays a concerning lack of comprehension of the gravity of the matters he has admitted.
- 33.** Therefore, on this point, we prefer the Proctor's submissions. Counsel for the Respondent submitted in mitigation on behalf of his client that "*At no point during his time at Citizen Church did the Respondent serve in a traditional curacy; as such he lacked the structured oversight, mentoring and formative support typically associated with a curacy.*" We remind ourselves that the lack of oversight is not the fault of the Respondent, but nevertheless the Panel agree entirely with this submission, and consider that completion of a period of ministry with equivalent oversight, mentoring and formative support is essential for the Respondent's proper reintegration into ordained ministry.
- 34.** We therefore impose a monition with a number of conditions that must be satisfied before consideration can be given to putting the Respondent in charge of a church organisation with ultimate responsibility. He will need to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to the Constitution, Clergy Terms of Service and the demands imposed on a Charitable Trustee. The conditions are designed to ensure that this happens. The full details of the penalty imposed are set out in **Annex A**.

Mark Powell KC – President & Chair
Mrs Buzz Squires
The Venerable Jonathan Davies
20 August 2025

ANNEX A: Penalty

In the Disciplinary Tribunal of the Church in Wales

In the case of the Reverend Ryan FOREY on a referral by the Bishop of Llandaff

UPON receiving written submissions from the Proctor and Counsel for the Reverend Ryan Forey ('the Respondent'),

AND UPON the Respondent admitting the charges in this matter annexed hereto.

IT IS ORDERED THAT

1. The Reverend Ryan Forey receive a monition in respect of all the charges. The primary monition is set out at paragraph 3 and is additionally subject to the conditions at paragraphs 2, 4 and 5.
2. The Reverend Ryan Forey shall present evidence of successful completion of Modules A, B and C of the Church in Wales Safeguarding Training Framework before being considered for any ordained ministry within the Church in Wales.
3. The Reverend Ryan Forey shall not hold a Relevant Post (meaning ministry area leader, incumbent, priest in charge, rector in a rectorial benefice, vicar in a rectorial benefice, or any other post which requires the holder to be a chair of trustees of a charity *ex officio*) until he has successfully completed a minimum period of 2 years' supervision under the direct supervision of a supervisor who must be an experienced incumbent (meaning at least 5 years of experience in a Relevant Post).

During the period of supervision, the following requirements will apply:

- a. He must work within the same ministry team as the supervisor, and is required to have regular meetings/supervision with them;
- b. He shall keep a written record of his supervision ("the Supervision Record");
- c. He shall provide the Supervision Record to his supervisor or any relevant person on request;
- d. He shall have reviews of his ministry with his supervisor where the progress of his Supervision Record and Development Record (as defined below) is recorded on a quarterly basis;

e. At the end of the minimum period of 2 years, 'successful completion' of the period will occur where he obtains the written confirmation of his Diocesan Bishop he has satisfactorily completed the period of supervision.

4. The Reverend Ryan Foey shall keep a record of his development in relation to the principles and procedures relevant to an ordained post in the Church in Wales ("the Development Record"). The following conditions apply to the Development Record:

a. It shall contain a record of his development in and adherence to the professional values and ministerial competencies required by the Church in Wales, contained within the documents referred to in the Statement of Terms of Service published pursuant to the *Clergy Terms of Service Canon 2010*;

b. It shall contain evidence of relevant training regarding the responsibilities of being a charitable trustee. Relevant training may be theoretical or practical and may include a period of mentorship by an experienced charitable trustee;

c. These conditions shall not replace any continual ministry development programme undertaken by the Diocese in which he exercises ministry.

5. On an annual basis, his compliance with paragraphs 3 and 4 of this order shall be reviewed by a Relevant Person. The Relevant Person shall record his compliance with the terms of the order in writing, to be kept in his record of supervision. A Relevant Person for the purposes of this condition shall be a Diocesan Bishop, Archdeacon, Diocesan Director of Ministry, or Diocesan Director of Post Ordination Training (or such other competent person nominated by the relevant Diocesan Bishop).

6. Until successful completion of the supervision, this Order and the full judgment of the Disciplinary Tribunal of the Church in Wales shall be disclosed by the Bishop of Llandaff to any Bishop seeking a ministerial reference or Clergy Current Status Letter from her in respect of the Respondent.

7. The President of the Disciplinary Tribunal may vary the terms this Order on application from the Respondent. As part of their consideration of such application, the President shall consult the Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese where the Respondent is ministering or seeking to minister.

ANNEX B: Charge

The Respondent (a Cleric who held a licence granted by a Bishop of the Church in Wales and who was in receipt of any emolument or other financial benefit from the Church in Wales at the relevant time) was guilty of conduct giving just cause for scandal or offence and of wilful disobedience to or breach of the provisions of the Constitution or of the Statement of Terms of Service published pursuant to the Clergy Terms of Service Canon 2010 contrary to Chapter IX, Paragraph 9(c) and 9(d) of the Constitution of the Church in Wales (“the Constitution”) during the period 2020-2024.

Particulars of the Allegations

First Allegation

Between October 2020 to February 2024, the Respondent whilst the vicar and chair of charitable trustees of the Parochial Church Council of Citizen Church (St Teilos Church Cardiff) did authorise, instruct or make payments to himself and [x], his wife, – namely payments of £300 per month in lieu of fees for parochial fees for services which were not conducted and £500 per month “clergy spouse” payments to [his wife] - from funds intended for said charity and thereby he obtained benefit(s) that were not reimbursement for legitimate expenses and were made otherwise than in accordance with the governing articles of said charitable trustees. (Contrary to Chapter IX, Paragraphs 9(c) and 9(d) of the Constitution).

Second Allegation

Between February 2023 and March 2023, the Respondent whilst the vicar of Citizen Church (St Teilos Church Cardiff) did allow to be used The Citizen App, (a mobile electronic application) which did display the names of children attending the Church to users of the App contrary to Article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation SI 2016/679 and safeguarding best practice, knowing that the names were so displayed to users. (Contrary to Chapter IX, Paragraphs 9(c) of the Constitution).

Third Allegation

The Respondent whilst the vicar of Citizen Church (St Teilos Church Cardiff) did establish a Church outside the Church in Wales, known as Be Church, Cardiff, and held or accepted the position of pastor without the consent of his Bishop (Contrary to Chapter IX, Paragraphs 9(c) and 9(d) of the Constitution).