



Church of England's work to tackle the housing crisis, it was

The Head of Planning for the Duchy of Cornwall is to help take forward the Church of England's work to tackle the housing crisis, it was announced today.

Nick Pollock has been seconded to a three-strong executive team reporting to the Church of England's Lead Bishop for Housing, Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, working to help the Church of England meet housing need in local communities.

He will join Canon Chris Beales, a member of the Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community, who has been working with the Diocese of Gloucester; and Benjamin Preece Smith, Diocesan Secretary of the Diocese of Gloucester.

The announcement comes as the Commission publishes its findings today in the report Coming Home. The team will offer expert advice, practical guidance and professional capacity to dioceses and other church landowners to enable them, individually or in partnership, to use their land and property holdings to build stronger communities and, where appropriate, deliver more affordable housing.

Their work will include supporting parishes as they respond to local housing issues and building strategic relationships with other denominations and other organisations, including planners, developers and housing associations. The team is due to begin work on March 1.

This has been made possible through financial support and expertise provided by Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance as part of its commitment to furthering the ministry and mission of the Church of England both within the Diocese of Gloucester and beyond. This builds on work currently undertaken within the Diocese.

An Advisory Board, chaired by Bishop Guli, will work with the team. Its members will include:

- Four supporting bishops each with relevant housing experience: The Bishop of Kensington, Graham Tomlin, Vice Chair of the Commission; the Bishop of Manchester, David Walker; the Bishop of Barking, Peter Hill and the Bishop of Tewkesbury, Robert Springett.
- Two further Commission members - Revd Lynne Cullens, Rector of Stockport and Brinnington and Chair of the National Estate Churches Network and David Orr, former Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation.

Charlie Arbuthnot, Chair of the Commission, said: "The Commission has set out how the Church of England can play a key role in tackling the housing crisis and meeting housing need in local communities. "I am thrilled to see this executive team take shape and delighted and honoured to have Nick join us – as part of a really strong and dedicated team, led by Bishop Guli, to ensure that we see real progress in making this vision become a reality."

Bishop Guli said: "It is wonderful news to know that there will be an Executive Team as well as an Advisory Board to carry forward the work of the

Commission. It will be a privilege to work alongside people who bring so much experience, expertise and commitment to the area of housing.”

Notes

Nick Pollock, Head of Planning for the Duchy of Cornwall, is part of the Duchy’s Executive Team. He brings strategic thinking and considerable planning and development experience from nearly 30 years delivering housing and mixed-use developments. Central to his work is building community and a lasting legacy. He will be seconded two days a week from the Duchy.

Chris Beales is currently a Commissioner and an ordained Anglican minister and social entrepreneur. He works mainly on economic development with faith communities, businesses, government and local groups. His particular remit as a Commissioner has been with the Church Commissioners and dioceses. He will join the team for two days a week.

Benjamin Preece Smith, Diocesan Secretary of the Diocese of Gloucester, is a chartered accountant, bringing development experience as founder and Director of the Diocese’s development company, The Good and Faithful Servant Ltd. He has been instrumental in building affordable housing on church land. He was previously Head of Finance for Christian Aid. He will be seconded by Gloucester diocese one day a week.

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