Dear [MP]

(please use your own words, as MPs may bin anything which looks like a petition)

I shall be copying you to my response to the Church of England’s consultation document GS2222. Responses have to be in by 30th September.

What is proposed, effectively, is to take power and resources from the parishes and aggregate them to the diocesan centre – reverse subsidiarity.  The proximate aim is to make it easier to close local churches and make parish clergy redundant, while appointing additional lay staff in roles which never before existed at diocesan and national level, with levels of remuneration multiples of what the clergy are paid.

I think most people would agree that the life of the Church of England has always been at local level in the parishes and that the parish network is a staple of English life even for those who are not regular churchgoers.  This hare-brained scheme owes more to outdated secular management theory and dogma than to the Gospel or an open-minded analysis of what ordinary people need and want from their Church.

Over the last few decades, local sources of income such as tithes, glebe, endowments and parish fees have been progressively nationalised.  The rationale was fairness.  There were some very small parishes with generous historical endowments and some very large parishes with severe social problems for which little provision had been inherited.  Redistribution of resources among the parishes made sense.

Unfortunately, the dioceses and Church House have come to regard this money donated over the centuries for parish ministry as their own to use how they see fit.

As the Established Church, the Church of England is ultimately governed under God by the Queen in Parliament; and the powers of General Synod are delegated to it by Parliament.  It is therefore appropriate for your constituents to ask you to intervene on their behalf when their interests are under threat on account of actions taken by the Church of England.

May I ask you therefore, please, to raise the concerns of many people in this country with Andrew Selous MP, the CofE’s Second Estates Commissioner, and request that the proposals in GS2222 be dismissed directly?

Please could you ask Andrew Selous MP to obtain answers from the Church to the following questions on which it should account to Parliament (please make up your own wording so that he doesn’t get duplicate questions):

1. How is it proper for the dioceses to propose the legislative change GS2222, which affects the interests of everyone in England, as all have a right to the ministry of the CofE, after advance consultation only with themselves? (para 26 of GS2222)
2. How is it proper for the dioceses to propose that rights of appeal against their decisions should be heard by them?
3. Why is it thought desirable that the process for church closures should be speeded up when the national trend is for more and more consultation before making irrevocable changes which affect our national heritage?

Yours sincerely,