

Katie Toussaint Jackson

From: Roger Evans <revans@harcourtchambers.co.uk>
Sent: 09 December 2025 10:02
To: Paul Britton; Rachel Morley; peter scott; 'alex barrow'; Kirstie Robbins; catherinecullis; 'simon evans'; john vigar; 'John Edwards'; Green, Elizabeth; georgebulmer@gmail.com; 'Tom Lloyd'
Cc: Richard Halsey; Agata Eltman; Katie Toussaint Jackson
Subject: RE: BISCATHORPE

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Paul,

I haven't seen the minutes of last week as yet, but my memory was that we were agreed to try to get money from the Church Commissioners. No matter, your plea has persuaded colleagues, and Rachel can take Biscathorpe further. Let's see what the QS comes up with.

I agree with your statement in your earlier email on this: " I think our approach should be to take Biscathorpe and make a really good job of repairing it with our own funds. We could then offer it to Robert Buckland, the new Third Commissioner, as an example of what we can do to rescue a building so badly treated by the Commissioners. I suggest that you should at that point ask for a meeting with him at which to raise the broader issue of what their strategy for closed rural churches is to be and what our role can be in that strategy."

I know Robert Buckland and I would hope he will be sensible and sympathetic.

Many thanks.

Best wishes,

Roger

Dear Katie,

These chains of emails re Biscathorpe ought to be noted and appended to the minutes please.

Many thanks.

Best wishes,

Roger

Roger Evans
Barrister

Telephone: [+44 \(0\)20 7353 6961](tel:+44(0)2073536961)

Website: www.harcourtchambers.co.uk

Follow: [in](#) [twitter](#)

harco



Winner
**FAMILY LAW
AWARDS 2024**

Regulated by the Bar Standards Board

This e-mail is intended for the use of the addressee only and may contain information that is confidential, privileged and/or exempt from disclosure. If you are not the intended recipient you must not read, copy, distribute or disseminate this communication or any attachments to anyone other than the addressee or use the information it contains or otherwise take any action in reliance on it. If you receive this communication in error, please inform me or a member of staff at Harcourt by telephone immediately and permanently delete it from your computer.

Please be aware of the risk of fraud. We will never tell you of changes to our bank details, nor will we accept changes to your bank details by email. Please contact us immediately about any messages which look suspicious.

From: Paul Britton <pauljbritton@live.co.uk>

Sent: 08 December 2025 21:46

To: Roger Evans <revans@harcourtchambers.co.uk>; Rachel Morley <rachel.morley@fofc.org.uk>; peter scott <peterscott323@btinternet.com>; 'alex barrow' <alexbarrow1@gmail.com>; Kirstie Robbins <kirstie@ptolemydean.co.uk>; catherinecullis <cath.cullis@talk21.com>; 'simon evans' <simon.jm.evans@gmail.com>; john vigar <john@johnevigar.com>; 'John Edwards' <edwards.johnwilliam@yahoo.co.uk>; Green, Elizabeth <elizabeth.green@nationaltrust.org.uk>; georgebulmer@gmail.com; 'Tom Lloyd' <lloyd.courthenry@gmail.com>

Cc: Richard Halsey <richard@rhalsey.co.uk>; Agata Eltman <agata@fofc.org.uk>; Katie Toussaint Jackson <office@fofc.org.uk>

Subject: Re: BISCATHORPE

Roger

Thank you. I didn't think that I was seeking to reverse anything we decided last week - we discussed briefly whether to ask the Commissioners for money but didn't decide to do so and it was left open. But that is now immaterial given that there is a majority for proceeding as I propose. Let's hope that the volunteer QS whom Rachel is going to consult doesn't come up with a much greater estimate than the architect's.

Paul

Sent from [Outlook](#)

From: Roger Evans <revans@harcourtchambers.co.uk>

Sent: Monday, December 8, 2025 11:30

To: Rachel Morley <rachel.morley@fofc.org.uk>; Paul Britton <pauljbritton@live.co.uk>; peter scott <peterscott323@btinternet.com>; 'alex barrow' <alexbarrow1@gmail.com>; Kirstie Robbins <kirstie@ptolemydean.co.uk>; catherinecullis <cath.cullis@talk21.com>; 'simon evans' <simon.jm.evans@gmail.com>; john vigar <john@johnevigar.com>; 'John Edwards' <edwards.johnwilliam@yahoo.co.uk>; Green, Elizabeth <elizabeth.green@nationaltrust.org.uk>; georgebulmer@gmail.com <georgebulmer@gmail.com>; 'Tom Lloyd' <lloyd.courthenry@gmail.com>

Cc: Richard Halsey <richard@rhalsey.co.uk>; Agata Eltman <agata@fofc.org.uk>; Katie Toussaint Jackson <office@fofc.org.uk>

Subject: RE: BISCATHORPE

Dear Paul,

Thank you. I agree Emily Gee is a friends of ours and to let her down would be very unfortunate. I am happy to reverse our decision.

But unless all colleagues agree by email, this is a matter for all Trustees in view of the expenditure.

Could colleagues let me have their views please?

If we don't agree, can this be parked till January, when we can have a short Teams' meeting to resolve this if necessary and the 2026 AGM?

Best wishes,

Roger

Roger Evans
Barrister

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7353 6961

Website: www.harcourtchambers.co.uk

Follow: [in](#) [🐦](#)

harco



Regulated by the Bar Standards Board

This e-mail is intended for the use of the addressee only and may contain information that is confidential,

privileged and/or exempt from disclosure. If you are not the intended recipient you must not read, copy, distribute or disseminate this communication or any attachments to anyone other than the addressee or use the information it contains or otherwise take any action in reliance on it. If you receive this communication in error, please inform me or a member of staff at Harcourt by telephone immediately and permanently delete it from your computer.

Please be aware of the risk of fraud. We will never tell you of changes to our bank details, nor will we accept changes to your bank details by email. Please contact us immediately about any messages which look suspicious.

From: Rachel Morley <rachel.morley@fofc.org.uk>

Sent: 08 December 2025 08:50

To: Paul Britton <pauljbritton@live.co.uk>; Roger Evans <revans@harcourtchambers.co.uk>; peter scott <peterscott323@btinternet.com>; 'alex barrow' <alexbarrow1@gmail.com>; Kirstie Robbins <kirstie@ptolemydean.co.uk>; catherinecullis <cath.cullis@talk21.com>; 'simon evans' <simon.jm.evans@gmail.com>; john vigar <john@johnevigar.com>; 'John Edwards' <edwards.johnwilliam@yahoo.co.uk>; Green, Elizabeth <elizabeth.green@nationaltrust.org.uk>; georgebulmer@gmail.com; 'Tom Lloyd' <lloyd.courthenry@gmail.com>

Cc: Richard Halsey <richard@rhalsey.co.uk>; Agata Eltman <agata@fofc.org.uk>; Katie Toussaint Jackson <office@fofc.org.uk>

Subject: RE: BISCATHORPE

Dear Paul (and Richard)

Thank you for such a clear and thoughtful email. I am happy to try this approach – like the fable of the sun and the wind having a competition.

On Sturmer, on Friday we had notification that a transfer is now with our solicitors, so we should probably just move forward positively on that one.

With all good wishes
Rachel

From: Paul Britton <pauljbritton@live.co.uk>

Sent: 05 December 2025 22:37

To: rogerevans <revans@harcourtchambers.co.uk>; peter scott <peterscott323@btinternet.com>; 'alex barrow' <alexbarrow1@gmail.com>; Kirstie Robbins <kirstie@ptolemydean.co.uk>; catherinecullis <cath.cullis@talk21.com>; 'simon evans' <simon.jm.evans@gmail.com>; john vigar <john@johnevigar.com>; 'John Edwards' <edwards.johnwilliam@yahoo.co.uk>; Green, Elizabeth <elizabeth.green@nationaltrust.org.uk>; georgebulmer@gmail.com; 'Tom Lloyd' <lloyd.courthenry@gmail.com>

Cc: Richard Halsey <richard@rhalsey.co.uk>; Rachel Morley <rachel.morley@fofc.org.uk>; Agata Eltman <agata@fofc.org.uk>; Katie Toussaint Jackson <office@fofc.org.uk>

Subject: BISCATHORPE

Roger

When we discussed Biscathorpe at Tuesday's council meeting, Catherine, supported by Richard, suggested that we should ask the Commissioners for a contribution to the cost of its repair, given that their neglect of the building over such a long period will add to our costs. I thought that that would be tactically unwise. I ought to explain to colleagues why I take that view. Richard has subsequently emailed me about this and we have discussed it. What follows has been agreed with him.

I agree entirely that the Commissioners have treated both Biscathorpe and the Friends shoddily and, in an ideal world, they would contribute to the cost of repairing it. But that is not the world we inhabit. The Commissioners, as Richard pointed out to me, care about redundant urban churches because they can make money out of them but they don't care much about rural ones, have no strategy for them now that the CCT is not an option for most of them and they do the minimum necessary to find other uses. Even in these cases, selling for domestic conversion is a leading option, at least for the smaller ones. In the past they have been dismissive of the Friends, regarding us as an irritant. I have heard them refer to us as "impractical idealists" whose philosophy they just don't understand or accept. Where they have transferred churches to us, they think that they are doing us a favour, not the other way round. They feel no obligation to us and would simply turn down any request for financial help.

Our approach has to be to try to change the Commissioners' view of us so that we are seen as a useful part of the solution to their rural redundant church problem. When we saw the then Third Estate Commissioner and the then chief executive (both have now moved on) two years ago, you will recall that we said that we had more resources than in the past and therefore more capacity to help with problem churches and wanted to be part of the solution. We emphasised that we had not come to ask for money. They listened politely and seemed supportive but nothing ever came of the meeting. We had a further opportunity when the Churchcare team were merged with the closed churches team at the Commissioners, under Emily Gee's leadership (Emily herself is one of our members). Rachel saw her and David Knight and had a much warmer reception. Periodic meetings have resulted and it was Emily who took the initiative to offer us Biscathorpe, a church which she had long known that we were interested in. This is quite a big step forward for us and our priority should be to build our credibility with them by showing that we can be useful to them. To ask for money now would embarrass Emily and undermine what we have achieved so far.

I think our approach should be to take Biscathorpe and make a really good job of repairing it with our own funds. We could then offer it to Robert Buckland, the new Third Commissioner, as an example of what we can do to rescue a building so badly treated by the Commissioners. I suggest that you should at that point ask for a meeting with him at which to raise the broader issue of what their strategy for closed rural churches is to be and what our role can be in that strategy.

Meanwhile, we should certainly complain about Sturmer and I will take this up with Emily Gee if Rachel will kindly provide me with the basic facts.

Paul

Sent from [Outlook](#)