



## Re St Mary, Boxford

St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Consistory Court: Gau Ch, 7 February 2023  
[2023] ECC SEI 1

### *Procedural irregularities – disposal of unwanted furniture – aumbries – doctrine*

The petitioners sought a faculty for the disposal of unwanted furniture and the installation of a nave altar and an aumbry in this Grade 1-listed church. The proposed works had the unanimous support of the church's PCC and the DAC recommended the proposals.

An objection was received from an individual who raised concerns about procedural irregularities; disputed the 'unwanted' nature of the relevant furniture; and objected to the installation of an aumbry on the basis that the church community had hitherto objected to reserving the sacrament, and that installing an aumbry would risk promoting 'Roman Catholic, non-Anglican, doctrine'. On the issue of a fresh petition addressing some of the procedural irregularities in relation to notice and consultation, the same individual objected again on similar grounds, but elected not to become a party opponent.

As to concerns about alleged failures in the display of notices, the court found that these concerns were valid, but distinguished *Re Emmanuel Church, Bentley* [2006] 2 WLR 1008 in this regard, finding that there had been no difficulties caused to potential objectors. As far as the unwanted furniture was concerned, the answer to the first *Duffield* question was negative; and the case for a faculty was made out.

Regarding the aumbry, the court dealt the objector's 'doctrinal' concerns by dismissing the objector's *ad hominem* comments about the church's incumbent; and commending the petitioner's response which emphasised the place of aumbries within the ecclesiology of the Church of England and the PCC's support for the proposal. The petitioner's response further addressed the practical need for an aumbry in allowing the reverent and prayerful storing of the sacrament, which was already stored for use in pastoral visits. Despite the doctrinal nature of the objector's concerns, the court had jurisdiction to decide on the introduction of an item which is a common feature in churches throughout the country. A faculty would be granted. [Jack Stuart]

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