

APPENDIX J

**COPYRIGHT BLOCK LICENSING SCHEME –
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

Background to Copyright Block Licensing Scheme

In March 2007, the Standing Committee agreed to propose to the General Synod, if possible, a bill to secure a block licensing scheme to cover all parishes of the Church of Ireland in respect of the text of hymns and other texts managed by the Christian Copyright Licensing Company. As this proposal incurred a cost for certain administration as well as a legal liability for the RCB, which would be the corporate party to any agreement, it was necessary to seek the approval of the RCB to proceed. The RCB asked specific questions in respect to the current volume of copying by parishes and the license cost related to this, compared with the cost that would be incurred for the block license scheme. This information had not been obtained in the research carried out. The RCB therefore asked for the additional research to be conducted before it should be asked to reconsider the proposal.

The Honorary Secretaries note their thanks to the Copyright Working Group for the initial research undertaken in 2006-07. The Honorary Secretaries have now identified the strengths and weaknesses of the existing scheme and the proposed scheme. The Honorary Secretaries propose that, with the approval of Standing Committee, they should now revert to the Diocesan Secretaries, and to the parishes to answer the additional questions posed by the RCB. As July and August are not propitious months in which to conduct a survey, it is proposed to do this early in September 2007, reporting to Standing Committee in November, so that the RCB may be consulted in sufficient time for legislation to be brought to next year's General Synod, if the Standing Committee so desires.

Strengths of block licensing

1. All parishes and bishops are covered by the licence in respect of hymns and songs managed by CCLI.

Weaknesses of block licensing

1. Many parishes will not distinguish between the words for which they are covered and the music, for which they are not.
2. Choirs may assume cover is in place when it does not apply to the special pieces selected.
3. The parish still carries liability for these items.
4. All parishes pay, whether they copy or not.
5. The RCB assumes some administrative cost, legal liability as the corporate party to the agreement.

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6. The diocese assumes some administrative cost, and potentially financial cost if parishes do not make their contribution.
7. The overall cost is high, with the possibility of future rises in cost of license.

Strengths of current system (parish responsible for securing all required copyright licenses or making required payments)

1. The parish pays for use.
2. The parish actively manages copyright for any type of material.
3. The responsibility, cost and administration are borne at the point of use. There is no hidden cost for the diocese, or for the parish that doesn't copy any material.

Weaknesses (current system)

1. Cost per copying parish may be higher.
2. Parishes that are slack in complying with copyright legislation are vulnerable to prosecution.
3. There is a potentially negative PR cost for the Church in non-compliant parishes.

***Note**

It is important to note that regardless of which system is adopted, the parish must still complete the same administration in terms of recording and reporting the copies made.

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