
Long waits for vicars

SIR – William Sitwell ([Features, December 16](#)) is being extremely optimistic if he thinks it “could be months” before his church has a new vicar. Interregnum began here when the last vicar left in May 2021 and will end in February 2024 when a new one is finally installed.

As for forcing vicars to retire at 70, they may end their stipendiary service then, but many continue to work in retirement on a voluntary basis, as has happened here, filling all the gaps caused by these lengthy absences of paid resident clergy.

Perhaps this is one way the Church has found to cut costs.

Penny Clive

Swanmore, Hampshire

SIR – William Sitwell asks why his vicar must retire at 70 while Joe Biden can continue as president at 81. The reason is that no one would want their vicar to end up like Mr Biden while in office.

Charles Dobson

Burton-in-Kendal, Cumbria

SIR – As a member of the Church in the Diocese of Carlisle, for several months I’ve been exhorted to pray for discernment for those choosing our new diocesan bishop. It would appear that this has been in vain (“Church fails to find bishop”, report, December 16).

The Archbishop of York explained that there will need to be time to “reflect” and “make a decision about which stage to recommence the discernment process”.

Perhaps a better solution would be to copy the ancient practice the Coptic church uses to choose a new pope. This involves the final three names being placed on the altar during a public liturgical service and a young boy picking the winner. It never fails.

Rev David A Smethurst
Natland, Cumbria
