

STANDING ORDERS FOR A PCC

Interpretation

This document is intended to be a helpful guide for a Parochial Church Council (PCC). Italicised sections are optional, but may be relevant in some situations.

The information provided comes from the Church Representation Rules, which is one of the [charity] Governing Documents for our parishes. A full copy of these rules can be found on the Church of England website¹.

General Advice

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STANDING ORDERS

I. Functions

The Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 states²:

1. It shall be the duty of the Minister and the Parochial Church Council to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish.
2. The functions of the Parochial Church Council shall include -
 - a. Co-operation with the Minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
 - b. the consideration and discussions of matters concerning the Church of England or any other matters of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the Church on any question;
 - c. making known and putting into effect any provision made by the Diocesan Synod or the Deanery Synod, but without prejudice to the powers of the Council on any particular matter

Notably, in the Diocese of Liverpool, the PCC's function also includes active engagement in Deanery Mission Planning, delivering the Growth agenda and promoting and ensuring that advice on good practice from the Diocese is adhered to;

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/church-representation-rules>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/Eliz2/4-5/3/section/2>

II. The Rights and Responsibilities of all PCC members

Each PCC is a 'body corporate', which means that it has a separate legal identity from the individuals who make up its membership and it is accountable for the decisions it takes. That said, all members still carry an individual, as well as corporate responsibility, for all decisions taken regardless of whether they were 'at the meeting' or not.

Although PCCs with an income of less than £100,000 per year are 'excepted from' registration with the Charity Commission, they are still required to follow all current Charity Law and Charity Commission guidance. PCCs are also expected to act on advice provided by Diocesan Officers concerning the implementation of current guidance and legislation.

III. Membership

A. General

There are 4 ways an individual might become a PCC member; ex-officio, appointed, elected & co-opted.

Only members of the PCC may attend meetings. Guest speakers or observers may only attend following a specific invitation.

Lay members can only serve on one PCC at any one time.

B. Ex-officio Members

Ex-officio members of the PCC are:

- Clergy Licensed to the Parish (the Incumbent & others including curates, Self-supporting, Pioneer & Sector Ministers);
- Licensed lay workers;
- Churchwardens;
- Lay representatives serving on either Deanery Synod, Diocesan Synod or General Synod, who are listed on the parish's Electoral Roll. (If a Synod member has their name on more than one parish Electoral Roll, they must choose just one respective PCC to be a member of).

C. Appointed

Readers who are licenced to the parish may be appointed by the Annual Meeting to serve on their PCC. This is an annual appointment.

On each occasion, the Annual Meeting may choose to appoint all, some or none of its Licenced Readers. It should be noted that Readers with PTO (Permission to Officiate) or Emeritus status cannot be appointed.

(Any Reader may stand in any lay election).

D. Elected Members

The total number of elected lay members is based on the number of people named on the parish's Electoral Roll:

- 6 representatives for up to 50 names;
- 9 representatives for 50-100 names;
- 12 representatives for 101-200 names and
- 15 representatives for 201 or more names.

E. Co-opted Members

The PCC can co-opt up to two additional members if it has 12 or less elected members, or three additional members if it has 15 elected members.

Co-opted members can be either clergy (*chiefly retired clergy with permission to officiate and active in the parish*) or laity who are 'Actual Communicants'³ of the Church of England and not already serving on another PCC.

Co-opted members have the same voting rights as any other PCC member.

F. Term of Office

The Term of Office for Churchwardens, appointed and co-opted members of the PCC is until the next Annual Meeting.

The Term of Office for Deanery Synod and elected members is 3 years, unless a casual vacancy is being filled, in which case the time period is the remaining Term of Office of the original post.

Deanery Synod elections are set by a national timetable, while PCC elections are held annually through one third of the representatives finishing their 3 year term at each Annual Meeting.

G. Guests and Observers

A PCC may invite guests or observers either to be present for specific agenda items, or to attend its meetings regularly (for example where a PCC Officer is not a member of the PCC).

IV. Regularity of Meetings

The PCC must hold a sufficient number of meetings in order to efficiently transact its business.

Ideally, meeting dates should be spread evenly across the calendar year.

Start and finishing times should be agreed at the first meeting after the Annual Meeting. The PCC may agree to extend a meeting to deal with urgent/important business. The Chair shall determine which items are urgent/important.

The PCC will reflect annually on the style and frequency of its meetings and in what ways it wishes to delegate to its officers and committees recognising its duties under charity and church law.

V. Quorum for a Meeting

A PCC meeting is quorate (has enough members present to conduct business);

- if a third of its current membership are present, and
- the lay members present outnumber the clergy members present.

VI. Postponed Meetings

If a meeting has to be delayed, PCC members should be given notice of the date of the reconvened meeting within fourteen days of the postponed meeting.

³ An 'Actual Communicant' is defined by Rule 83(2)

VII. Emergency Meetings

If an emergency meeting is required then:

- it may be called by the Chair with whatever written notice they deem to be practicable,
- a quorum for such a meeting is a majority of the current PCC membership and the lay members present outnumber clergy members present,
- only the business specified in the calling notice for the meeting may be considered,
- *decisions taken should be circulated to the whole PCC as soon as practicable.*

VIII. Business

Items of Business to be considered by the PCC must be listed on the published agenda.

Additional items may only be added to an agenda, during a meeting, if at least three quarters of the members present give their consent.

Where a report relating to a specific item should have been circulated and this has not happened then the Chair may propose that the discussion be deferred to a subsequent meeting.

IX. Voting

All business is decided by a simple majority of those members present and voting. In the case of an equality of votes for any item, the Chair has a second, casting vote.

X. Election & Appointment of Officers

The Chair of the PCC is always the Minister. *Such curates as may be members of the PCC may also Chair meetings of the PCC, at the Minister's discretion.*

At its first meeting after the Annual Meeting the PCC must:

- elect one of its lay members to be the Vice-chair.

It is the role of the Vice-chair to Chair the PCC and Annual Meeting during an interregnum/vacancy, or at the request of the Chair;

- appoint people to the following roles (none of whom need to be PCC members and none of whom become PCC members by their appointment):

- * Treasurer,
- * Secretary,
- * Electoral Roll Officer,
- * Parish Safeguarding Officer,
- * Health & Safety Officer;

- appoint members of the Standing Committee;

- such other appointments as shall be determined by the PCC (*including representation on Church Together Groups and other key local bodies*);

XI. Standing Committee

The PCC must appoint a Standing Committee each year at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting. The minimum size of this committee is dependent on the number of names listed on the parish's Electoral Roll.

If more than 50 names on the Electoral Roll then the Standing Committee shall consist of:

- the Minister,
- two Churchwardens,
- at least two other lay members of the PCC, appointed by the PCC.

If there are 50 or less names on the Electoral Roll then the Standing Committee shall consist of:

- the Minister,
- at least two other lay members of the PCC, appointed by the PCC. (Either, both, or neither of these two lay members may be a Churchwarden).

(It is common for the PCC Treasurer and Secretary to be appointed, if they are members of the PCC.)

The Standing Committee may transact the business of the PCC between full meetings of the Council, but it may not discharge a duty of the PCC, nor exercise a power that requires a resolution of the PCC.

A Standing Committee may only act within the boundaries given to it by the PCC.

XII. Other Committees

The PCC may create other committees *on either a time-limited or a permanent basis.*

The Minister is entitled to be an ex-officio member of any such committee, if they so wish, and receive all papers for these meetings, if they so request.

Such committees may include non PCC members. These committees should report regularly to the PCC in whatever form is considered appropriate, by the PCC.

The terms of reference & membership of all committees should be ratified by the PCC and reviewed periodically.

XIII. Any other urgent business

Items requiring urgent discussion or items for information should be notified to the Chair at least forty-eight hours before the meeting

XIV. Minutes

There shall be a record of the proceedings of each PCC and Standing Committee meeting. The minutes must record the name of each member present – for all or part of the meeting – and the names of any other person present.

Minutes should be approved and signed at the next meeting by the Chair following the agreement of their accuracy. Any amendments needed should be added during the meeting & initialled by the Chair prior to signing.

XV. Papers

A notice regarding an upcoming PCC meeting shall be displayed on or near the main door of the church, churches, or other locations being used to provide public worship within the parish, at least ten days before the meeting.

The meeting agenda, previous meeting minutes and ideally relevant reports/other papers must be circulated at least seven days before the meeting to all PCC members. Papers may be sent to PCC members electronically, by post, or delivered by hand.

XVI Confidential Items

The PCC may decide that certain items are confidential, these items shall then be omitted from any publically available record.

XVII. Availability of Minutes

The Bishop and Archdeacons (and any persons authorised in writing by them) may have access to the full Minutes of the PCC, as may the appointed Auditor or Independent Examiner.

Anyone named on the parish's Electoral Roll may have access to the approved Minutes, excluding any confidential items.

XVIII. Dealing with Casual Vacancies & Unfilled Posts

If the Annual Meeting is not to be held within the next two months then the PCC may fill any casual vacancies, either in its own membership or among its representatives on the Deanery Synod, by simple resolution. Nominees for such elections must meet all the normal qualification criteria for the role.

While each PCC member, at all times, remains jointly responsible for all financial and governance matters, if there is no appointed Treasurer, Secretary or Electoral Roll Officer then it is the responsibility of the Churchwardens to ensure that the key requirements of these roles continue to be fulfilled.