

St. Vincent's Crookes: Parish Pastoral Council – Terms of reference

“The parish council works with the priest to serve the people”

1. A Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) is a consultative body of the faithful, representative of the whole parish community, willing to work in close partnership with the priest of the parish to further the mission of Christ and his Church in this corner of the Lord's vineyard that is a parish. The Parish Pastoral Council should act in the spirit of service.
2. The parish council aims to be an inclusive, representative body.
3. The Parish Pastoral Council should discern by way of consensus. Members strive to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on all matters of direction and policy. A consensus exists when there is a clear option to which most members can ascribe; and those who oppose it have had an opportunity to influence the discussion.
4. All decisions of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be reached by consensus of the quorum present. A simple majority of the Parish Pastoral Council members shall constitute a quorum.
5. Decisions of the Parish Pastoral Council will be final, only by consent and approval of the Priest.
6. An important responsibility of the Parish Pastoral Council is to actively engage in ongoing renewal through prayer, study, listening, and dialogue. It is a leadership body engaged with the Priest in discerning the ways God is speaking to this community in this time and place. For its actions to be guided with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, the meetings begin with prayer and enrichment, followed by listening to one another in faith and love, listening to the larger community of parishioners in similar faith and love, and end meetings again in prayer.
7. Appointed members shall serve at the discretion of the Priest for a period up 3 years. Following that time, they may be reappointed or replaced.
8. A member may serve on the PPC for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
9. If a member is absent from three regular meetings in a year, the Parish Pastoral Council Chairperson will approach that member about his/her intention and ability to serve. If the Parish Pastoral Council cannot receive assurances pertaining to regular attendance, following consultation with the Priest, the Chairperson will ask that person to resign.
10. The PPC will meet a minimum of six times each year
11. Notifications of meetings should be accompanied by an agenda outlining the business to be transacted at the meeting.
12. Meetings should be focused and last no longer than one and a half hours.
13. The **Parish Priest** is both member and President. While he does not chair the parish council, the Parish Priest is the president. By presiding at the meeting of the parish council the parish priest brings the authority of the Bishop to the work of the council.

14. As parish priest he bears the ultimate responsibility for decisions regarding pastoral ministry and the overall mission of the parish. In rare cases he may choose not to follow the advice of the parish council (Code of canon law 536) but as a member of the PC he will not readily ignore their advice because he has participated in the prayerful process of making the decisions.

15. The role of **Chairperson** is key. He or she must be able to work with the parish priest, and also have the confidence of the whole pastoral council. The appointment of Chairperson should be for three years but if willing, and by agreement with the members of the PPC, he/she may be re-appointed for a further three years thereafter.

16. The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the parish priest and develop an understanding of his aspirations for the parish.
- Run the PPC meetings effectively, ensuring that everyone has a chance to contribute.
- Ensure significant time for prayer and formation is included at meetings to maintain the pastoral focus of the council.
- Provide encouragement and support for council members.

17. It is recommended that the Chairperson of the PPC should be invited to attend some meetings of the Parish Finance Committee each year, particularly when the annual budget, annual accounts and diocesan returns are tabled and approved

18. The appointment of **Secretary** should be for three years but if willing, and by agreement with the members of the PPC, he/she may be re-appointed for a further three years

19. The role of the Secretary is to:

- Arrange for notices of meetings to be published in the parish bulletin (for the two weekends in advance of the meeting?)
- Produce and distribute agendas (plus any preparatory reading) at least two days before the meeting takes place.
- Produce PPC meeting minutes recording decisions and actions; these should be made available to all parishioners within two weeks after each meeting on the parish website and in the narthex. The Secretary should aim to circulate draft minutes to PPC members for comment within the week following the meeting so that minutes can be finalised for publication within the two-week timescale.

20. There will be one open meeting each year for members of the parish.

21. An emergency meeting can be called at the discretion of the chairperson or parish priest.

22. Any member of the parish who would like to serve on the PPC is invited to discuss this with the parish priest or one of the current members.

Version2, 19.06.24

(Previous version was 22.09.22)