



BRIEFING NOTE

MEETINGS OF PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS (COVID-19 LOCKDOWN)

TO ALL DIOCESAN CLERGY

A joint note from the Provincial Vicars-General and the Provincial Registrars, giving guidance on the various aspects of church life which must currently be conducted virtually, has just been issued.

Amongst other things, the note dealt with the question of Parochial Church Council meetings where the advice given was that PCCs can, if they wish, meet using virtual means such as Skype or Zoom which enables the members to see and hear each other. However, care must be taken so that members of a PCC who are unable to participate in a meeting in that way are not excluded from the PCC's deliberations and decision making. The Chair should take steps to ensure that they are able to participate so far as possible, including where necessary by means of the procedure for conducting business by correspondence which is set out in Rule M29 of the Church Representation Rules 2020 (see below). It is also recommended that following a virtual meeting decisions, such as the authorising of expenditure, entering into contracts or those that require a formal resolution of the PCC, are put in written form and circulated for formal approval under the correspondence procedure in Rule M29, which under Rule 76 can be conducted by email.

Rule 76 of the Church Representation Rules 2020 states as follows:-

- 76(1) If a person has provided an email address - (a) any communication required or authorised to be given to that person by, or under these Rules, may be sent to that email address, and (b) any disclosure of the person's name and address required or authorised by or under these Rules must include that email address.
- 76(2) A communication sent by email is to be treated as being in writing if it is received in a form which is legible and capable of being used for subsequent reference.
- 76(3) Where a communication is sent to a person by email at the most recent address provided by that person, it is to be treated as having been given to the person at the time at which it was sent.

76(4) Where a communication is sent to a person by post and addressed to that person at his or her last known address, it is treated as having been given to the person by the time in which it would be delivered in the ordinary course of post.

Rule M29 states as follows:-

M29(1) The Chair of the PCC may, if he or she considers that any business can properly be conducted by correspondence, instruct the Secretary of the PCC to send proposals requiring the approval of members to - (a) each member of the PCC and (b) any person entitled to attend the meetings of the PCC under Rule M24(2).

M29(2) Unless objection to the proposals is received from members in such numbers and within such period from the date of their being sent as the Chair of the PCC may specify, the proposals are to be treated at the end of that period as approved by the PCC as if they had been approved at a duly convened meeting.

M29(3) Where proposals are circulated under this Rule for approval, the Secretary must report to the next meeting of the PCC - (a) whether the proposals were approved and (b) if objections to the proposals were received, the number of members from whom they were received.

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Diocesan Registrar
16 April 2020