

To: PCC Secretaries and Incumbents

9 December 2019

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2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

This letter contains information to help you run your Church's Annual Meetings.

2020 sees a brand new edition of the Church Representation Rules. These have been recast in simpler language than previously used and incorporate some significant changes. These are outlined in the annex to this letter. The first change you may notice is that the APCM can now be held at any point up until 31 May.

This year we will be conducting two elections.

First, Deanery Synods are elected this year. The numbers for each APCM to elect are related to the total number of people on your electoral roll. Basically you have one representative for every 40 people on your roll up to a maximum of 6 representatives.

Deanery Synod members make up the electorate for the House of Laity in General Synod. And our second election in the summer will be for that body. For the first time it will be possible to vote online for General Synod. It will then be important that I am advised of the full membership of deanery synods including e-mail addresses for deanery synod members.

You should be able to find the forms you need for the annual meeting at <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/pccs/apcms/>. The national church legal team have confirmed that they meet GDPR requirements.

Annual parochial church meeting and meeting for election of churchwardens

An Annual Parochial Church Meeting must be held on or before the 31st May. There is standard form of notice for advertising this meeting. You should also have a separate meeting to elect Churchwardens, on or before 31st May and a form of notice for advertising this meeting is also needed. Though in practice it is usual for the two meetings to be held on the same occasion, in legal terms they are distinct, and so it is important for two separate notices to be used. Both notices must be displayed at or near the main door of every Anglican church and building licensed for public worship in the parish for at least two Sundays before the meeting.

For more detailed information about the above paragraph, including the display of notices in parishes with more than one church, please refer to the Church Representation Rules ('CRR'), rules M1 & M2.

Since 2016, the list of disqualifications to be on the PCC has been increased to include people who are disqualified from being a charity trustee, or who have been convicted of certain offences against children. The nomination form makes this clear, and you will need to be pastorally sensitive about how you draw this to people's attention.

Other actions after the meetings

Within 28 days of the APCM, you must also send copies of the annual report and financial statements as approved at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to the secretary of the Peterborough Diocesan Board of Finance c/o the Finance Department at the Diocesan Office, The Palace, Peterborough, PE1 1YB or email to andrew.roberts@peterborough-diocese.org.uk After the first PCC meeting of the new session, please send details of any changes in officers to karen.setchfield@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

More details information on elections, conduct of meetings, electoral roll revision and other matters may be found in the Church Representation rules, available free of charge at <http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis/church-representation-rules.aspx>; alternatively, the latest print edition may be obtained from all the usual sources, including Church House Bookshop, 31 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BN, tel: 020 7898 1306, www.chbookshop.co.uk

Many other useful resources, including information on responsibilities of PCC members as charity trustees, requirements for registering with the Charity Commission, guidance on PCC accounts and much else, are provided on the Church of England's national Stewardship & Resources website, www.parishresources.co.uk

Thank you for your help in running this aspect of the church's local and national life.

With all good wishes for 2020

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Roberts
Diocesan Secretary

ANNEX

Changes to the Church Representation Rules

The Church Representation and Ministers Measure 2019 is due to come into force on 1 January 2020.

The new Rules are much clearer to follow and should be more user-friendly in practice than the current Rules.

PCCs should be aware of the following changes:

Admission to the electoral roll

Where a lay person wishes to have their name added to a parish electoral roll then they must now make one of three declarations. These declarations are:

- (a) they are a member of the Church of England or a Church in communion with it and is resident in the parish; or
- (b) they are a member of the Church of England or a Church in communion with it, but they are not resident in the parish, although they have habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months; or
- (c) is a member in good standing of a Church which is not in communion with the Church of England but subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, is also a member of the Church of England and has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months.

Representatives of worshipping communities involved in mission initiatives

The new Rules recognise that individuals who are part of a worshipping community involved in a Bishop's mission initiative (i.e. a mission initiative which has been endorsed by a Bishop's Mission Order pursuant to the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011) may now be eligible for election to a deanery or diocesan synod, or the General Synod.

Electronic communication

The new Rules confirm that where a person provides an email address any communication required or authorised to be given by that person by or under the new Rules may be sent by email. Where a person's name and address is required to be disclosed under the new Rules, then there is also a requirement to disclose their email address. There is therefore no need to obtain specific consent from individuals to using their email address for communication purposes.

Personal data

The new Rules provide that any person that handles personal data must ensure that it is held securely and in doing so, must have regard to related guidance issued by the Archbishop's Council.

The new Rules make it clear that where an individual provides an email address in their application for enrolment on the parish electoral roll, the roll must specify that email address.

However, if a request is made to the PCC to inspect the roll, then a copy must be made available but it should only include the names; no other personal data. Also in the case of publication of a new or revised roll, only the names should be published (no other personal data).

Model rules for parish governance

The new Rules include "model rules" for parish governance (relating to the APCM and PCC meetings). Generally, these model rules reflect the provisions of the current Rules, albeit they are set out much more clearly in one part of the new Rules. An APCM or special parochial church meeting may make a scheme to amend, supplement or replace the model rules, subject to some exceptions listed in new Rule 12(2).

The current Rules require the PCC to hold at least four meetings each year. However, the new Rules relax this requirement and confirm that a PCC is to hold "sufficient number of meetings to enable the efficient transaction of its business". The new Rules make provision for PCCs to conduct business "by correspondence", rather than at a meeting, which may allow PCCs to conduct their business more flexibly and in urgent situations if required.

The model Rules make it clear that, whilst the Standing Committee can conduct business of the PCC between meetings, it does not have the authority to discharge a duty of the PCC or exercise a power of the PCC which is subject to the PCC passing a resolution or complying with another requirement.

Joint Councils

The new Rules allow "connected parishes" to make a scheme (at an annual meeting or special parochial church meeting) to establish a joint council comprising the minister of each parish involved in the arrangement and lay representatives elected, chosen or appointed from among those individuals on the roll of the relevant parishes.

For the purposes of this new Rule, parishes will be "connected" if:

(a) they each belong to the same benefice;

(b) the benefice to which they belong is held in plurality (i.e. they have the same incumbent) with the benefice to which the other belongs; or

(c) they are in the area of the same group ministry.

A joint council established by a scheme under the new Rules will have the same legal status as a PCC and the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 will apply to it as if it were a PCC.

The scheme must provide for the transfer of each relevant PCC to the joint council of all property, rights, liabilities or functions (or some of them). In order to reverse the arrangements, e.g. if future circumstances mean that one parish is no longer required to form part of the joint council, a further scheme will be required.

Any scheme made under the new Rules to create a joint council will not affect the status of any parish to which the scheme applies or any right which an individual has by being a parishioner or having their name on the parish electoral roll.

Other points to note are:

Preparation of a new electoral roll

The next time a new electoral roll will need to be prepared is 2025 (and thereafter every six years).

Election of parochial representatives to the Deanery Synod

Parochial representatives are to be appointed to the Deanery Synod at the APCM held in 2020 (and thereafter every three years).

An individual may hold office as a parochial representative for a maximum of two terms of office. This rule does not apply to any term of office which commenced before 1 January 2020, where an individual has been appointed to fill a casual vacancy or where an annual meeting resolves that this limit on the length of service should not apply to the parish.

Election of members of the House of Clergy and House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod

Deanery Synods will need to elect members to the House of Clergy and the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod in 2021 (and thereafter every three years).

Where the General Synod has adopted an electronic voting system, the Diocesan Synod may also resolve to have a system of electronic voting to the Diocesan Synod.