

# The PCC Secretary Handbook



The Diocese of  
*Canterbury*

2023

## KEY TASKS

- to liaise with the incumbent or chairman of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) over the preparation of the agenda and supporting papers for meetings of the PCC.
- to prepare, type and issue the agenda and supporting papers in good time, at least 7 days before the meeting.
- to attend PCC meetings and take accurate notes from which to prepare the minutes.
- to keep an accurate record of attendance at meetings.
- to record all formal resolutions passed by the Council, together with voting figures.
- to ensure that the PCC fix the dates of future meetings.
- to produce and distribute the minutes of each meeting.
- to ensure that a copy of the minutes and any supporting papers (but excluding any confidential items) are available for public inspection.
- to respond to requests from the Diocese from time to time (e.g. to convene a meeting with the Bishop at the start of a vacancy - the "Section 12" Meeting).
- to organise the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), post the appropriate notices and commission, collect, duplicate and issue written reports, agendas and minutes.
- to report briefly to the APCM on the work of the PCC.
- to notify the Diocesan Secretary of any change in parish officers, or their address details as soon as possible.
- to notify the Deanery Synod Secretary of changes in Parish Representatives on Deanery Synod.

### In addition Secretaries may be asked

- to handle correspondence on behalf of the Parish.
- to service meetings of other groups in the Parish.
- to seek information from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and/or to handle applications for Faculties.

## Our Vision

Changed Lives → Changing Lives

**By God's grace we want to be a people who are...**

...confident & creative disciples of Jesus Christ

...rooted in scripture & drenched in prayer

...living gratefully, giving generously, caring for creation & sharing the gospel

...growing in number & expectations – of God & ourselves

...motivated by justice & love, open to the Spirit & ready for adventure!

### Therefore we will...

Each of the five diocesan frameworks has set priorities based on these objectives

### Children, Schools and Young People

- Ensuring CofE schools are working as effectively as possible, in terms of compliance, distinctiveness and in the areas of RE and collective worship
- Supporting parishes with their work with children and young people both in the life of the church and in outreach
- Shaping government policy in education

### Licensed Ministries

- Re-imagining Ministry as the main priority

### Local Church Development

- Engaging in strategic missional planning
- Growing the church through spirituality and discipleship
- Delivering training as a multiplier for mission and ministry

### The Social Just Network (formerly Communities & Partnership)

- Building capacity in the core team via a skills audit and internship programme
- Running a programme of workshops for churches, NGOs and Universities for social action
- Offering seed corn grants for community based projects

### Resources and Compliance

- Providing a protection of the Diocese and component parishes in the areas of finance, safeguarding, property, employment and reputation
- Working with the parishes to think about the wider issues of Stewardship using financial health-checks and working to develop business /mission plans
- Promoting and facilitating communication in its widest sense

## Useful contacts at Diocesan House,

Lady Wootton's Green, Canterbury, CT1 1NQ. Tel: (01227) 459401

Email: [reception@diocant.org](mailto:reception@diocant.org)

Diocesan Secretary	Stephen Taylor (or his EA Jo Manser) Email: <a href="mailto:STaylor@diocant.org">STaylor@diocant.org</a> Email: <a href="mailto:jmanser@diocant.org">jmanser@diocant.org</a>
Communications	Orla Garratt Email: <a href="mailto:ogarratt@diocant.org">ogarratt@diocant.org</a>
Pastoral Committee	Nigel Collins (conduct of vacancies etc) Email: <a href="mailto:ncollins@diocant.org">ncollins@diocant.org</a>
Website	Marilyn Shrimpton Email: <a href="mailto:mshrimpton@diocant.org">mshrimpton@diocant.org</a>
Diocesan Directory	Cordelia Sain-Ley-Berry-Gray Email: <a href="mailto:csain-ley-berry-gray@diocant.org">csain-ley-berry-gray@diocant.org</a>
D A C	Kevin Tucker (Advice on structural alterations to churches; lists of experienced craftsmen and suppliers of goods and services) Email: <a href="mailto:KTucker@diocant.org">KTucker@diocant.org</a>
Generous Giving	Lindsay Yates Email: <a href="mailto:LYates@diocant.org">LYates@diocant.org</a>

## Useful Sources

[Church Representation Rules 2022](#) - every PCC Secretary needs a copy  
Available from Church House Publishing

[The Canterbury Diocesan Directory](#) (on-line)

Contact Cordelia Sain-Ley-Berry-Gray

[A Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors](#)

Kenneth Macmorran and Timothy Briden (published by Bloomsbury

Continuum) available on Amazon £16.99

An ABC for the PCC 5<sup>th</sup> Edition- John Pitchford

(Mowbray) available on Amazon

[Practical Church Management](#) - James Behrens.

## KEY RULES GOVERNING PCCs

(see "Church Representation Rules" esp. Appendix II for full list).

### Membership

- (1) All licensed clergy and lay workers (Ex-officio)
- (2) Churchwardens (Ex-officio)
- (3) Readers as decided by APCM (Ex-officio)
- (4) General / Diocesan / Deanery Synod members (Ex-officio)
- (5) Representatives of the laity (Elected)
- (6) Co-opted members (Co-opted)

Keep a definitive list of members

(name, address, phone, email, type, term)

### Number of meetings

PCCs must hold at least four meetings a year (as well as the Annual Meeting), spread evenly through the year.

### Chairman

The incumbent is ex-officio chairman of the PCC but the PCC must elect a lay vice-chairman.

### Quorum

A PCC is quorate i.e. can conduct business, if a third of its current membership is present.

### Business

Three quarters of the members present at a meeting must consent to the transaction of any item of business not specified on the agenda.

### Voting

Is decided by a simple majority of those members present and voting. (The Chairman has a second, or casting vote if necessary).

### Postponed Meetings

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

## Emergency Meetings

- can be convened by the Chairman with at least 3 clear days' notice in writing.
- the quorum for such a meeting is a majority of PCC members
- only business specified in the notice convening the meeting may be transacted.

## Committees

The PCC must appoint a Standing Committee of at least 5 people. The Incumbent and Churchwardens are members ex-officio; the PCC must appoint at least another 2 PCC members. But the Standing Committee does not have to meet!

The PCC may appoint other committees (eg Fabric, Worship, Stewardship, Social Responsibility etc).

## THE ANNUAL MEETINGS

Two meetings must be held each year not later than 30th April. The first is the Vestry Meeting at which Churchwardens are elected; the second is the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). They are usually held one after the other on the same day and at the same venue.

## Notices to be published in connection with the Annual Meetings

These must be on the official forms available from SPCK Bookshops. Ask for the "Annual Meeting Pack" ref SG'A - this pack includes:-

- Revision of Church Electoral Roll; (SG'A')**
- Notice of Annual Parochial Church Meeting; (SG'A')**
- Election of Churchwardens;**
- Church Electoral Roll Certificate; (SG7)**
- Results of Elections (SG'A').**

<p>6 Fabric</p> <p>The Fabric Officer reported on the current state of the Church and Church Hall.</p> <p>6.1 Matters arising:</p> <p>Fire alarm The PCC was not satisfied with the fire alarm system in the Church Hall and asked the Finance Committee to investigate the cost of a suitable replacement. The Fabric Officer was asked to seek advice from the Fire Service.</p>	<p>Fabric Officer</p>
<p>7 Diocesan Policy Document</p> <p>It was agreed to set up a working group consisting of ..... The Revd P Body (Assistant Curate) to report to the next meeting the implications for the Parish Plan.</p>	<p>Revd P Body</p>
<p>8 Next Meeting</p> <p>Members agreed that the next meeting would be held on ..... at 8 pm.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p>9 Confidentiality</p> <p>It was agreed that one item of the Worship Committee's report should be regarded as confidential.</p> <p>There being no other business, the meeting closed with the Grace at ..... pm.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>

**Example of MINUTES of a PCC MEETING**

<p>MINUTES of a Meeting of St Michael's PCC held At ..... on ..... at 8pm PRESENT ..... (Chairman), other members (in alphabetical order), (together with..... (representing the Diocesan Board of Finance) (if appropriate).</p> <p>1 The meeting opened with prayer.</p> <p>2 Apologies for absence were received from (names)</p> <p>3 Members: The Chairman welcomed Mrs ..... who was attending her first meeting.</p> <p>4 The Minutes of the meeting held on ..... were confirmed and signed, subject to an amendment to paragraph 1. Under the list of those present: delete Mr ..... Substitute Mr.....</p> <p>Matters arising</p> <p>4.1 Christmas Services: The Chairman confirmed that he had sent letters of thanks to all readers at the Carol Services.</p> <p>4.2 Parking Restrictions: It was noted that advice was awaited from the Property Services Section of the District Council.</p> <p>5 Worship Committee Report The Council received a report from .....</p> <p>5.1 Matters arising: Lent, Holy Week and Easter. It was agreed that parishioners should be encouraged to join the groups offered in Lent.</p>	<p>Action</p>
<p></p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p></p>	<p>Fabric Officer</p>

**a) In connection with the Electoral Roll**

(see Rules 1-5 of "Church Representation Rules")

The Electoral Roll is revised annually before the APCM and renewed every six years.

i) Church Electoral Roll Notification

A form for completion is sent to all PCC Secretaries by the Diocesan Secretary for return by 1st June.

ii) Annual Revision

Four to six weeks before APCM - post notice of intended revision (15 days notice must be given and revision must be completed between 15-28 days of APCM).

At least 15 days before APCM - post revised roll.

iii) Renewal of Roll

The Diocesan Secretary will advise on procedure and timetable.

**b) In connection with the meeting**

i) Election of Churchwardens.

ii) Notice of APCM

Both i) and ii) must be posted for a period to include the two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.

iii) Results of the elections - must be posted as soon as possible after the meeting for a period of 14 days.

**Annual Vestry Meeting (Business)**

(see Rule 13 of "Church Representation Rules")

- **purpose:** to elect the Churchwardens.
- **who may attend:** all members of the Church Electoral Roll and all those resident in the parish.

## **Annual Parochial Church Meeting (Business)**

(see Rules 6-12 of "Church Representation Rules")

- **who may attend:** only members of the Church Electoral Roll may speak and vote.
- **essential business:**

The APCM shall receive from the PCC and shall be free to discuss:-

- a) a report on changes in the roll since the last APCM, except in those years in which a new roll is prepared.
  - b) a report from the Secretary on the PCC's proceedings (short and factual - number of meetings; percentage attendance; matters discussed). Make it interesting !
  - c) a report from the Treasurer on parish finances.
  - d) the audited accounts of the PCC for the year ended the preceding 31st December.
  - e) audited statements of funds or property if any, remaining in the hands of the PCC at the preceding 31st December.
  - f) a report upon the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church or churches in the parish.
  - g) a report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod.
- **elections** (in given order)
    - a) every 3 years, from 2002) Deanery Synod representatives Diocesan Secretary will advise). Results to Diocesan Secretary and Deanery Synod Secretary.
    - b) PCC members.
    - c) Sidespersons.
    - d) Independent Examiner or Auditor to the PCC (the Treasurer should not propose or second the Auditor!).

When you have written the draft minutes show them to the Chairman for approval. Then get them, photocopied and circulated. It is best if the minutes are circulated as soon as possible after the meeting. They will not, of course, be formally agreed until the next full meeting of the PCC.

Always keep some spare copies until the next meeting and retain your original notes until the minutes have been approved by the PCC. Don't be afraid to use "code" words to give life to the minutes. For instance, a "lively" discussion can mean that blows were not actually exchanged, a "heated" discussion probably involved casualties, whilst a "full and frank" discussion needs Kate Adie to take the minutes!

### **Circulating the minutes**

One method is to circulate the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting (preferably within two weeks) to prompt those responsible for taking action. Another method is to circulate the minutes with the agenda for the next meeting. You must establish with the PCC which arrangements they prefer (if this has not been agreed already). In any case, spare copies should be available at the next meeting for members who have mislaid theirs!

Copies of the minutes should be sent to each member of the PCC.

A copy of the minutes (but not the confidential part) must be available for public inspection.

It is helpful to keep a file with the agenda and minutes (in date order) and you should take the file to each meeting and ensure that the Chairman signs the file copy of the minutes.

### **Retaining the minutes**

The minutes must be retained indefinitely - they are an historical record. There are several ways of ensuring that pages cannot be removed from the minute book i.e. numbering pages, or numbering items through a year.

## **OTHER POINTS**

Listen to the discussion and note the points on which the meeting reaches general agreement. If there is a clear split in opinion summarise both sides.

If you are unsure of the conclusions reached, or decisions taken, on a particular item you must ask the Chairman to summarise the discussion. A good Chairman will do this anyway, for the benefit of the meeting as a whole, especially if the discussion has been a long one.

Make notes during the meeting and write up the minutes afterwards. Do this as soon as possible while the proceedings are still fresh in your mind.

Minutes are effectively a history of the PCC and as such should normally be written in the past tense. They should be written so as to give someone who was not at the meeting a clear summary of what took place.

Sections and paragraphs within the minutes should be numbered for easy reference and should have clear headings.

Matters discussed in different parts of the meeting can be brought together in the minutes if this makes the record of the meeting more understandable.

When the PCC decides on action to be taken, make sure that both the action and the person taking it are clearly shown in the minutes. (You may find it helpful to include an "Action Column" which lists the person responsible against each item requiring action. Alternatively you could underline, or show in capital letters, both the action and the person taking it).

The PCC as a whole is responsible for the decisions taken at its meetings. However, any member can ask to have his/her dissent formally recorded in the minutes.

Where the PCC decides that part of the meeting is confidential, you should minute those items separately (preferably on coloured paper and marked "Confidential").

## **PREPARING AGENDAS**

One of the Secretary's main responsibilities is to prepare an agenda for each meeting in consultation with the Chairman. It may help to arrange a meeting to agree the items for the agenda.

Remember that any member of the PCC is entitled to ask for an item to be included.

Regular agenda items will be:

- apologies for absence
- confirming the minutes of the last meeting
- matters arising from the minutes
- receiving minutes of committees and working parties (if these have been established by the PCC)
- matters arising from these minutes
- correspondence
- any items requested by the Deanery or Diocese
- confidentiality

Each agenda item should be worded in a way that makes its purpose clear. It may even be helpful to indicate how much time is expected to be spent on each item. A draft agenda is set out on page 7 as a general guide.

Ten clear days before the meeting a notice announcing the meeting and signed by the Incumbent should be posted in the Church Porch.

The agenda must be sent out at least 7 clear days before each meeting. Copies of any additional papers including the minutes of the previous meeting (if these have not been circulated already), should be attached.

A copy of the agenda and papers should be made available in the Church for public inspection - apart for confidential material.

## DRAFT AGENDA for PCC Meetings (general guide only)

1. Prayer
2. Apologies for absence (all meetings).
3. Membership: To report any changes in the membership of the PCC since the last meeting (as appropriate).
4. Minutes:
  - a. To approve the minutes of the meeting on (either “already circulated” or “attached”) (all meetings)
  - b. Matters arising.
5. Minutes or Reports of Committees/Working Parties:  
To receive the minutes/report of the ..... Committee and to discuss any matters arising (all meetings).
6. Fabric: To review the state of repair of the buildings and/or discuss future plans.
7. Finance: To receive a report from the Treasurer.
8. Deanery or Diocesan Items:
9. Future arrangements:  
To make plans for a festival/ event.
10. Correspondence:
11. Future Meetings: To agree the dates of meetings for the next year (annual item).
12. Any other urgent business (all meetings).
13. Confidentiality: To decide whether any part of the proceedings of the meeting should be regarded as confidential (all meetings).
14. Publication of minutes: To decide whether any items should be excluded from the minutes to be made available for public inspection (all meetings).

### Notes

- If a guest is attending for one or a limited number of items it is courteous to place the item(s) near the beginning of the agenda so that the guest need not remain for items for which he/she is not required.
- Any other urgent business - any item requiring an answer should be notified to the Chairman or Incumbent at least 48 hours before the meeting. Major items of business should NOT be raised under this heading, except in an emergency. They should be included as separate items on the next agenda.

### WRITING MINUTES

The purpose of taking minutes is to provide a record of a meeting that is

- ♦ Accurate
- ♦ Brief
- ♦ Clear

### Minutes

- should be concise and to the point
- must record all important facts and the results of discussions
- must record the wording of formal motions, resolutions and amendments together with voting figures
- should not normally record details of actual discussions although they should indicate the main areas of discussion
- should not be a rambling narrative of who said what to whom!

The minutes of formal meetings normally follow a set pattern:

- Description of meeting - ie: title, date, time, place, etc
- List of those present
- Apologies for absence
- Minutes of the last meeting
- Record of any corrections
- Note that minutes were approved
- Matters arising from the minutes - normally this reports action taken as a result of decisions at the last meeting
- Other agenda items
- Date of next meeting

Confidentiality - i e: deciding whether any items should not be discussed outside the meeting, and whether any items should be recorded separately in a Confidential section.

Minutes, or records, of the proceedings of meetings of the PCC must be written down and signed at the next meeting by the Chairman to confirm that they are an accurate record of what happened.