

# PARISH OF OUR LADY AND THE SAINTS OF SUSSEX, CHICHESTER – PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

## **DRAFT** TERMS OF REFERENCE: AUTUMN 2021

### **Purpose**

The Parish Pastoral Council exists as a consultative body to help the clergy consider pastoral and other works and to propose and co-ordinate practical measures for implementing them. It has a remit across the whole parish, all four churches, and a very particular role in promoting unity among and cooperation between our communities.

This stems from: “Christ’s faithful are at liberty to make known their needs, especially their spiritual needs, and their wishes to the pastors of the Church” (Canon 212#2) and “They have the right...the duty, in keeping with their knowledge, competence and position, to manifest to the sacred pastors their views on matters which concern the good of the Church.” (Canon 212#3).

The Parish Pastoral Council: investigates pastoral matters, reflects on them, and reaches practical conclusions that are recommended to the parish priest.

The Parish Pastoral Council does not have jurisdiction over liturgical matters (Canon 528#2). The parish priest has the final decision over all matters the Parish Pastoral Council considers (Canon 536#2).

### **Appointments/Elections**

The Parish Pastoral Council comprises: the parish priest (or in the interim, the Moderator) and other parish clergy, the chair of the Parish Finance Committee, and at least eight parish pastoral councillors.

Others, such as the safeguarding representative or the chair of the Fabric Committee may be invited to attend when the business of the Council suggests it.

The Parish Pastoral Councillors are appointed thus:

- Via the parish newsletter, the Parish Priest/Moderator invites people to put forward their names if they wish to serve as Parish Pastoral Councillors. Details of required term etc. to be outlined in newsletter.

- If more names are received than there are places, the Parish Priest will appoint from among the nominations in order best to represent the parish and the various areas of parish pastoral, liturgical and social life across the Council.
- Alternatively, he may organise a vote for parishioners to indicate via ballot which councillor/s they wish to elect.
- Successful councillor/s announced in parish newsletter.
- In the absence of sufficient nominations, the Parish Priest reserves the right to invite and appoint parishioners to join the Parish Pastoral Council.
- It is desirable that the members should, where possible, reflect the makeup of the wider parish and any request for nominations will always encourage applications from a wide and diverse range of parishioners.

The Parish Pastoral Councillors are appointed for a term of three years to run from January 2022. Thereafter all terms are for 3 years.

A councillor can serve for two terms (a total of a possible 6 years), after which time they will need to step down for a period of one term (minimum 3 years). The exception to this is if there are insufficient parishioners to fulfil Parish Pastoral Council roles, in which case the Parish Priest can allow somebody to serve for three or more consecutive terms. It is hoped that some, or all of the initial councillors, will serve more than one term to ensure consistency.

## **Chairperson**

The Parish Pastoral Council chairperson is to be nominated on at the first meeting in January 2022 and thereafter at the Annual Parish Pastoral Council Meeting – to take place once annually from January 2023.

Nominations are called for by the Parish Priest, made and seconded. In the event that there is only one nomination, the nominee is appointed and takes on the role of chairperson immediately. In the event of more than one nomination, a ballot is called and counted by the Parish Priest, who hands over to the winner of the ballot. In the event of a tie, the Parish Priest has the casting vote.

The chairperson can serve from 1 to 6 years, or more than 6 years in exceptional circumstances that require somebody to serve as a councillor for three or more consecutive terms.

## **Resignations and Requests to Leave the Parish Pastoral Council**

If a councillor wishes to resign from the Parish Pastoral Council, or a councillor wishes to resign as chairperson, this must be done in writing to the parish priest with as much notice as possible.

In the event of a councillor resigning, the Parish Priest will invite applications for a replacement councillor from the parish via the parish newsletter.

In the event of the chairperson resigning their role, a new chairperson should be elected by the remaining councillors at the next appropriate Parish Pastoral Council meeting.

Should a councillor act in a manner unbecoming to their position, the Parish Priest can remove said member from the council or the parish priest and fellow councillors reserve the right to hold a vote on whether said councillor should be removed from the Parish Pastoral Council. In the event of a tied decision, the Parish Priest has the casting vote.

## **Agenda Items and Voting**

Items for the Parish Pastoral Council meeting agenda are to be submitted to the Presbytery by post or email, or to a member of the Parish Pastoral Council at least one week in advance of Parish Pastoral Council meetings, the dates of which will be published in the parish newsletter with sufficient notice. Items will be raised at the next appropriate Parish Pastoral Council meeting. Parish pastoral councillors can each add items to the agenda, either in advance or during the AOB section of the meeting.

Each agenda item will be discussed by the Parish Pastoral Council and, where necessary and appropriate, a way forward agreed by an informal vote (show of hands). The Parish Priest has the casting vote in the event of a tied decision and in any instance where it is necessary to prioritise the activities or ideas that will be progressed.

While the Parish Priest will always give due regard to the views of the Parish Pastoral Council, especially when there is consensus among the members, all final decision-making rights remain his.

## **Meeting Dates**

Parish Pastoral Council meetings are to take place four times a year, with the subsequent date to be agreed at the end of each meeting and published in the minutes.

Meetings will rotate between the parish's four churches: one meeting per year in each church.

## **Meeting Minutes**

The Parish Pastoral Council chair will record minutes from each meeting in the form of concise action points and points of note. These will be made available to the Council and to parishioners as soon as possible after the Meeting.

## **Meeting Format/ Agenda**

The meeting format/agenda will follow the format of:

- Opening Prayer
- Update on previous meeting's minutes and update on actions
- Discussion of new items
- AOB discussion
- Closing prayer

## **Administration**

It is the chairperson's responsibility to:

- Agree the next Parish Pastoral Council meeting date
- Advise the Parish Office of this date for the newsletter/to alert parishioners to submit any agenda items or any items decided and deadlines for this
- To circulate meeting minutes for approval after each meeting and then make these available
- Circulate an agenda to the Parish Pastoral Council members in advance of each meeting

## **Other Responsibilities**

It is assumed that, except for matters clearly falling to the Finance and Fabric Committees, Parish Pastoral Councillors will agree between themselves who will take responsibility for progressing items/ideas – with the parish priest having the final decision in the event it is necessary.