



HANDBOOK FOR

PCC SECRETARIES

Welcome to the office of the PCC Secretary, and thank you for agreeing to take on the role.

This short guide has been produced to help you, and hopefully it covers most of the tasks required of you. It also gives you a brief introduction to the Church Representation Rules which relate to representation at all levels from parochial church council through deanery and diocesan synods to General Synod.

Please remember at all times that the staff of Church House are happy to help with any problems you may come across. We may not always know the answers but we will probably know someone who does.

In this booklet you will find information on PCC meetings - the agenda and the minutes, a list of the information which is required from you by the Diocese, and when it should be provided together with a timetable of what a PCC Secretary should do. There is a small section on the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) and its requirements. You will also find examples of an agenda and minutes. The booklet begins with a section on the Church Representation Rules.

Make sure that the outgoing PCC Secretary has passed to you the minute book and a file with all other papers relevant to the post. These will be the 'tools of the trade' that you will need to commence your duties.

The Church Representation Rules

(Under the Interpretation Act 1978, words in the Church Representation Rules importing the masculine gender include the feminine.)

The Church Representation Rules in their original form were contained in Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969. This Measure built on a scheme of church government established in 1919, and established the system we have today of synods, each with a mixed clerical and lay membership, at national, diocesan and ruri-decanal levels. Pccs were first given a legal status by the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1921. The Rules can be amended from time to time by resolution of the General Synod. The most up to date version is Church Representation Rules 2011 (blue cover).

The rules lay down:

- the composition of the pcc and the various synods
- the business which they must carry out and
- the way it should be executed
- the rules about the electoral roll
- the business of the apcm
- the method of elections to the various bodies
- and the eligibility for election

They are an essential reference guide for every pcc secretary, and can be purchased through Church House Bookshop Westminster.

You might also find it helpful to have a copy of the following publications:

A Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councilors

Practical Church Management

In brief your tasks are:

To prepare the agenda for PCC meetings, with the Incumbent or Chair, and circulate to members at least seven days before the meeting.

Attend the PCC meetings and take accurate notes, prepare and distribute the minutes of each meeting.

Keep an accurate record of attendance at meetings (*you will need these figures later*).

Ensure that the PCC fixes the dates of future meetings - an agenda item will make sure this is done.

Record (as part of the minutes) all resolutions passed by the PCC with the names of proposer and seconder and voting figures.

Inform 1) the Diocesan Secretary and 2) the secretary of the deanery synod of your name and address, any changes to the parish officers and their addresses and changes in deanery synod representatives from your parish.

Organise the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) posting the appropriate notices and collating the annual report of the parish, including the reports required by Church Representation Rules and Church Accounting Regulations.

Write the minutes of APCM.

Respond to requests from the Diocese as necessary (e.g. convening a meeting with the Bishop at the start of a vacancy)

You may additionally find that you are asked to do some of the following:

Post the appropriate electoral roll notice and certificate (in the absence of the electoral roll officer)

handle correspondence on behalf of the parish

service meetings of other groups in the parish

seek information from the Diocesan Office.

The PCC Meeting

(The rules are fully detailed in the Church Representation Rules, and in particular in Appendix II.)

- Number of meetings Pccs must hold at least four meetings a year (in addition to the apcm) and they should be spread throughout the year.
- Quorum A pcc is quorate (which means it can legally conduct its business) if a third of its current members is present.
- Business Three quarters of members present at a meeting must agree to the transaction of any business which is not part of the agenda.
- Voting Voting is decided by simple majority of those members present. If necessary, the chairman has a second or casting vote.
- Postponed meetings If a meeting has to be postponed, members must be given written notice of the date of the reconvened meeting within fourteen days of the original meeting date. The chairman, vice-chairman and secretary or any two of these can decide if a meeting should be postponed.
- Emergency meetings - can be convened by the chair with at least three clear days' notice in writing.
- the quorum for such a meeting is a majority of pcc members (i.e. more than half)
- only business specified in the notice convening the meeting may be transacted.

PCC Committee Meeting and Standing and Finance Committee Meetings

You will need with you:

- 1 Notebook and two pens or pencils/laptop/tablet**
- 2 Agenda and all attachments**
- 3 Register**
- 4 Minutes of previous meetings that are on the Agenda for approval and attachments**
- 5 Reports that are going to be discussed e.g. Finance**
- 6 Any letters that you have to read out – such as from missionaries**
- 7 Minute file(s) to cover past few meetings**
- 8 Recent correspondence file**
- 9 Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors**
- 10 Church Representation Rules**
- 11 PCC Secretary's Handbook**
- 12 Any spare copies of Agenda and previous minutes**
- 13 Issue minutes asap to all members of PCC**

An example of an agenda - (*a general guide only*)

PCC of Upper Godwot

A G E N D A

1. **Prayer**
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Membership** - a report on changes in the membership of the pcc since the last meeting (*this may not be an item on every occasion*)
4. **Minutes:**
 - i. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on
 - ii. Matters arising from the minutes
5. **Minutes/reports of sub-committees/working parties:**
To receive the minutes/report of theCommittee and to discuss any matters arising.
6. **Fabric** (*state of the building, repairs, future plans*)
7. **Finance** (*to receive a report from the treasurer*)
8. **Deanery or diocesan items:**
9. **Safeguarding:** to receive any relevant updates or reports
10. **Future events:** to make arrangements for a festival or forthcoming event.
11. **Correspondence**
12. **Future meetings:** to agree the dates of meetings for the next year (annual item)
13. **Any other urgent business:**
14. **Confidentiality:** to decide whether any part of the proceedings of the meeting should be regarded as confidential.
15. **Publication of minutes:** to decide whether any items should be excluded from the minutes which will be available in the church for public inspection.

The Agenda

This is one of your main tasks, and preparation will usually be undertaken in consultation with the Chair, although any member of the PCC is entitled to ask for an item to be included.

The agenda should include regular recurring items such as apologies for absence and the minutes of the last meeting, as well as occasional items such as membership of the PCC or reports of sub-committees.

NOTE: If a guest (perhaps your organist, or architect) is attending for a particular item, it will be helpful if this item is placed at the beginning of the agenda so that the guest need not attend the whole meeting.

There are certain rules about the processes leading up to the meeting, which are generally the responsibility of the PCC secretary. These are found in Church Representation Rules, but to summarise:

Ten days before the meeting a notice announcing the meeting, signed by the Incumbent, should be posted in the church porch.

Seven days (at the latest) before the meeting, the agenda must be sent out, together with any additional papers and minutes of the previous meeting if not previously circulated.

A copy of the agenda and papers should be made available in the church for public inspection. Confidential material should however be removed from this copy.

The meeting itself

Minutes

The Church Representation Rules also make reference to the minutes of PCC meetings. The essential things to record are:

the names of those PCC members present.

the names of members voting for and against any resolution should be recorded **only when one fifth of those members present require it**, although an **individual member** can require that the minutes contain a record of the manner in which his vote was cast on any resolution.

After the above, it is necessary to provide a record of any resolutions passed by the PCC. Most importantly the minutes should be meaningful, without being too long and detailed.

Formal minutes often follow a set pattern, usually dictated by the agenda of the meeting:

Description of meeting, e.g. date, time, and place, etc.

List of those present

Apologies for absence

Minutes of the last meeting (note any corrections and that minutes were approved)

Matters arising from the minutes (normally reports of action taken on decisions from the last meeting)

Other agenda items

Date and venue of next meeting

Confidentiality

Other points:

When you have prepared the draft minutes you should check them with the chair of the meeting, before they are circulated to members. It is important that you keep your notes until the minutes have been agreed at the start of the next meeting - you may need to refer to them in case of a disputed minute.

Access to the minutes

The Church Representation Rules are helpful in this respect as they give details of who may and may not have access to the minutes of the PCC. They should be available to:

all members of the PCC, who shall also be able to have access to the minutes of past meetings which the Chair and Vice-Chair jointly determine to be relevant to current PCC business.

the auditor of the PCC's accounts, the Bishop and the Archdeacon (or a person authorised by them in writing)

anyone on the electoral roll may see the current year's minutes (i.e. for meetings held since the last APCM) except for those deemed confidential.

anyone else needs to be authorised by the PCC, although it should be noted that when deposited in the Diocesan Records Office permission is not required.

Data Protection Act 1998

With the above act the data subject has greater rights to his own records; that the data subject can challenge data-holding organisations through the courts; that paper-based records are also covered by the Act and that data cannot be exported to non-EU countries that are considered to have inadequate privacy laws.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you need to notify please contact Church House or the Data Protection Registrar's helpline (01625 545740) website: www.ico.gov.uk

The Annual Parish Meeting (formerly known as the annual vestry meeting) and AM - the PCC Secretary's role

As PCC Secretary, you will be expected to play a full part in the organisation of both the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

The purpose of the first of these meetings is to elect the Churchwardens. It is covered in section 13 of Church Representation Rules. Anyone resident in the parish or on the electoral roll of the parish may attend and vote.

The second meeting (usually held immediately after the annual parish meeting) has a number of purposes and these are covered in Church Representation Rules sections 6 to 12. The essential business is to receive a number of reports (which are listed in Church Representation Rules) and to elect representatives to the Deanery Synod and the PCC, and to elect sides-persons and an auditor to the PCC.

It is important to note that from time to time changes are made to Church Representation Rules. The current edition is 2011.

At the APCM, you will be expected to present a short report on the previous year's activities of the PCC. It should be concise, and contain the number of meetings, percentage attendance, and matters discussed. It is likely also that as PCC Secretary you will be required to take minutes of the APCM. After the APCM you should notify the Diocesan Secretary and the Deanery Synod secretary of the results of the elections to deanery synod (if they have been held that year).

Jobs you need to do for the diocese

Each year before the APCM you will receive two copies of a form from the diocese.

This shows the information for your parish as we have it recorded. It contains the names and addresses of:

Churchwardens, PCC secretary, PCC treasurer, electoral roll officer, child protection representative

After the first PCC meeting following the APCM, you should amend the form as necessary, returning one copy as soon as possible to Church House, Hove. There is a space for the electoral roll figure which has been presented at the APCM, and the names and addresses of your Deanery Synod representatives. The second copy is for your own information but **you must remember** to send the names and addresses of your Deanery Synod representatives to your Deanery Synod secretary.

It is important that any changes in the PCC officers or Deanery Synod representatives which occur during the year are sent to us and the Synod secretary as applicable so that all information may be kept up to date.

In the event of your parish entering a vacancy, the churchwardens will be appointed sequestrators.

- January • decide, with Incumbent and Churchwardens, on a date for the APCM
- March • settle agenda for APCM with Incumbent (guidance can be found in Church Representation Rules)
- April • APCM is held (remember to put up the appropriate notices at least two Sundays before the meeting)
- return forms to Diocese/Deanery Synod with details of your parish's Deanery Synod representatives
- May • after the first meeting of the newly elected PCC, return forms to Diocese with details of Churchwardens, PCC Secretary and Treasurer and REMIND Treasurer to send a copy of the accounts and annual report to the diocese.

Space for notes

Space for useful contacts

Church House

Incumbent

Churchwarden 1

Churchwarden 2

Treasurer

Rural Dean

Deanery Lay Chair

Deanery Treasurer

Deanery Secretary

Bishop

Archdeacon

Diocesan Secretary

DAC

Diocesan Church House
211 New Church Road
Hove, East Sussex BN3 4ED
Telephone: 01273 421021 Fax 01273 421041
The Diocesan Fund & Board of Finance (Incorporated)
Charity No. 243134

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