

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, WOODFORD GREEN (THE "COUNCIL")

1. DESCRIPTION

The Council:

- (i) serves the parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Woodford Green (the "Parish");
- (ii) is a body based on collaborative ministry that works with assists the Parish Priest in planning and coordinating the overall general policy of the Parish in order to carry out the mission of Christ in the Church; and
- (iii) encourages, promotes and oversees all parish activities;
- (iv) is a consultative body governed by this Constitution and the doctrine, liturgy and laws of the Roman Catholic Church; the Parish Priest retains final control on all matters

Commented [BH1]: Seeking to reflect current understanding of roles

Commented [BH2]: Our role as a parish goes beyond massgoers

Commented [BH3]: For the avoidance of doubt and seeking to strike the right balance. The Council is not there to usurp the role of the priest, but neither is it a puppet.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

The Council shall send any notices, reports or other communications in a timely and effective manner. Communications must be made as widely accessible as possible to the Parish, for example, through:

- (i) the Parish website;
- (ii) the Parish newsletter;
- (iii) a notice in the Church porch;
- (iv) an announcement by a member of the Parish clergy during Mass;
- (v) via e-mail, text or social media;
- (vi) being made available to view in the Parish Office.

3. ENTITLEMENT TO VOTE AND STAND FOR ELECTION

In order stand for election to the Council or to cast a vote at the Annual Parish Meeting, individuals must be:

- (i) a Catholic person a registered parishioner;
- (ii) 16 or older at the time of the Annual Parish Meeting; and
- (iii) ordinarily resident within the Parish or regularly attending services at the Parish Mass centres.

Commented [BH4]: Some active parishioners are not Catholics

Commented [BH5]: Mere residence is surely not enough

4. COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Council Members

4.1. The following constitute the membership of the Council:

- (i) the Parish Priest and or his deputy;
- (ii) a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 elected lay members;
- (iii) any Ex-Officio Members (as defined in section 4.2 below);
- (iv) any Co-Opted Members (as defined in section 4.7 below).

Commented [BH6]: This is for voting purposes; anyone can attend

Commented [BH7]: This is no longer applicable, and ignores other representatives: CAFOD, Woodford Council of Churches, TELCO etc. See proposed new clause 7.9

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Ex-Officio Members

4.2. The Parish representatives to the Diocese of Brentwood and to the Deanery, shall, if not appointed from the Council's Elected Members, be ex-officio members of the Council ("Ex-Officio Members"). A Parish Deacon or Parish Religious selected by the Parish Priest shall be an ex-officio member of the Council.

Commented [BH8]: This confirms our Deacon's position while being flexible about future arrangements.

Commented [BH9]: This is outdated, and ignores other parish representatives (Woodford Council of Churches, CAFOD, TELCO). See proposed new 7.9

Duties of Council Members

4.3 The Council Members shall:

- (i) abide by the terms of this Constitution;
- (ii) operate at all times in the best interests of the Parish; and
- (iii) attend all Council meetings and the meetings of any Committee of which they are a member or give notice that they are unable to attend.

Term of office

4.4 Elected Members may serve for 3 years from the date of their election (the "Initial Term"). At the expiry of the Initial Term, Elected Members may stand for re-election at the Annual Parish Meeting in accordance with section 5.5. The maximum term of consecutive service for an Elected Member shall be 9 years.

Removal of Council Members

4.5 If a Council Member:

- (i) fails to comply with their duties under section 4.3(i) and (ii); or
 - (ii) fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with their duties under section 4.3(iii) on more than three occasions; or
 - (iii) ceases to meet the eligibility criteria in section 3;
- then the Council may deliver a notice to that Council Member removing him or her from office.

Resignation of Council Member

4.6 A Council Member may resign from office by giving written notice to the Council.

Co-Option

4.7 The Council may at any time co-opt additional members (the "Co-Opted Members") to serve on the Council until the next Annual Parish Meeting, **provided that** the total number of Elected Members and Co-Opted Members serving on the Council at any one time shall not exceed 12.

5. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting

5.1 Each year, the Council shall convene a meeting of all members of the Parish eligible to attend under section 3 (the "Annual Parish Meeting").

The purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting is:

- i. to consider a report from the Council on the work undertaken in the Parish by the Council during the previous year (the "Annual Report");

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- ii. to consider the Parish accounts prepared by the Finance Committee;
- iii. to elect members of the Council in accordance with this Constitution;

iv. to approve the minutes of the preceding Annual Parish Meeting;
v. to review and vote on any proposal for the amendment of this Constitution;

vi. to consider any Parish matters raised by any member of the Parish attending the Annual Parish Meeting; and subject to Annual Parish Meeting time constraints and the attendance of the parishioner concerned, to consider any Parish matters notified in writing to the Council Secretary at least 7 days before the meeting.

vii. to vote on any formal motion submitted by a member of the Parish meeting the eligibility criteria in section 3 (a "Voting Member"). Voting Members must submit notice of any formal motion in writing to the Parish Priest Council Secretary at least 21 days before the date of the Annual Parish Meeting;

ix. at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting, to consider any Parish matters raised at the meeting.

Commented [BH10]: Original wording too vague and impractical

Commented [BH11]: Transparency, openness

Conduct of the Annual Parish Meeting

5.2 The Parish Priest (or, in his absence, his nominee) shall chair the Annual Parish Meeting and shall nominate an individual to take minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting. Minutes shall be published effectively within 28 days of the Annual Parish Meeting and shall be approved at the next Annual Parish Meeting.

Convening the Annual Parish Meeting

5.3 The Council shall convene the Annual Parish Meeting by giving at least 28 days' notice of the meeting. The notice shall:

- (i) be published effectively;
- (ii) state the number of positions on the Council that will be vacant at the time of the Annual Parish Meeting; and
- (iii) secure nominations for election and outline the procedure for nomination under section 5.5.

Annual Report and Accounts

5.4 At least 14 days before the Annual Parish Meeting the Council shall ensure that copies of the following documents are published effectively:

- (i) the Annual Report; and
- (ii) the accounts of the finances of the Parish for the preceding year prepared by the Finance Committee.

Standing for election

5.5 In order to stand for election at the Annual Parish Meeting, candidates must meet the eligibility criteria in section 3 and must be nominated by two Voting Members. The nomination must:

- (i) be in writing signed by the candidate and the Voting Members nominating that candidate;
- (ii) be submitted to the Parish Office at least 14 clear days before the date of the Annual Parish Meeting; and
- (iii) attach a statement prepared by the candidate of less than 250 words setting out the candidate's relevant experience and reasons

for wanting to serve on the Council.

The ~~PPC Secretary~~Council shall publish effectively a list of the candidates standing for election and copies of their statements.

Procedure for election

5.6 Election of Members shall take place at the Annual Parish Meeting, by secret ballot of Voting Members present at the meeting. The candidates with the highest number of votes shall be elected to office. In the event of a tie, the Parish Priest shall have a second or casting vote.

6. OFFICERS

~~As soon as possible after~~~~Within 28 days of~~ the Annual Parish Meeting, the Parish Priest shall convene a

Council meeting, at which the Council Members shall:

- (i) elect a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council from among themselves, by secret ballot of all Council Members present. Prospective candidates will give a short presentation to the Council. In the event of a tie for either role, the Parish Priest shall have a second and casting vote; and
- (ii) appoint a Secretary, who need not be a Council Member.

7. COUNCIL MEETINGS

Dates and Time of Council Meetings

7.1 The Council shall meet a minimum of ~~6~~8 times a year. Dates and times of Council meetings shall be fixed by the Council and published effectively giving at least 7 clear days' notice.

Emergency Meetings

7.2 Any 2 Council Members may convene an emergency meeting by giving all Council Members as much notice as possible, but not less than 24 hours. Decisions taken at an emergency meeting shall be subject to ratification by the Council at the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

Quorum

7.3 The quorum for any Council meeting shall be 6.

Conduct of Council Meetings

7.4 The Chair (or, in his absence, the Vice-Chair) shall preside at meetings of the Council. If neither is present at a Council meeting, the Council Members present shall select one of their number to preside at the meeting.

Attendance of Voting Members at Council Meetings

7.5 Any Parishioner satisfying the criteria in 3 may attend any Council meeting but shall not be entitled to vote and may speak only if invited to do so by the person presiding at the meeting.

Decision Making at Council Meetings

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Commented [BH12]: Needs to be soon; 28 days is too long

Commented [BH13]: Each PPC should decide for itself, even though 8 times may well be appropriate.

7.6 Decisions shall be made at Council meetings by a show of hands, and decided by a simple majority. If there are an equal number of votes, the person presiding at the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

Veto and Deferral of Decisions

7.7 The Parish Priest shall have a right not to implement any decision of the Council. In the absence of the Parish Priest, his deputy shall have a right to defer a decision of the Council until the next Council meeting at which the Parish Priest is present. The Parish Priest shall, at the request of the Council, give written reasons for any decision which he does not implement.

Minutes and Records

7.8 The Secretary shall:

- (i) keep minutes of the business transacted by the Council;
- (ii) communicate approved minutes to the Parish; and
- (iii) keep a record of all appointments, resolutions and formal acts of the Council.

The minutes of every meeting shall be approved by the Council at the subsequent Council meeting.

Review of Parish activities

7.9 The Council shall maintain and publish a schedule of topics it will focus on to ensure key areas of parish activity receive appropriate attention; this will often require Council meeting agenda items attended by appropriate representatives.

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Commented [BH14]: ... especially as representatives and leaders are not usually Council members. This is partly good practice, partly to recognise that most Parish work does not involve the Council directly.

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8. COMMITTEES

The Council may appoint from Council Members or other suitable persons, a committee (a "Committee") to undertake particular business and may delegate to such a Committee any of the functions of the Council. Each Committee shall:

- (i) produce a document, to be ratified by the Council, that sets out the membership, areas of focus, powers delegated to it by the Council (including spending powers), constraints and restrictions, and frequency of meetings of that Committee (the "Terms of Reference"); and
- (ii) report regularly to the Council on the Committee's progress.

9. AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

Any proposed change to this Constitution must first be submitted for the consideration of the Council, which will decide whether it will be put to the Annual Parish Meeting. It will be adopted only if approved at the Annual Parish Meeting by a vote of not less than two thirds of the Voting Members present.

Communication:

Where the constitution says "in writing", that includes by email to an appropriate official email address.

Contact with the PPC or the PPC Secretary should be via the parish office or PPC email address.

Date ratified at the Annual Parish Meeting ~~16th July 2017~~ 14th July 2024

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