Annual Letter to PCC Secretaries

Dear PCC Secretary

Welcome to those of you who are new to the role of PCC Secretary, and thank you for taking on what is a key role in the smooth running of the PCC, and for your parish.

This letter comes at an important time in our life together as a Diocese, following the launch, in June last year, of ‘Capital Vision 2020’, our vision for how, together, we serve Jesus Christ in London. Since the launch, PCCs have been exploring what ‘Capital Vision 2020’ means in the life of the parish. You, as PCC Secretary, are likely to have been part of these discussions.

The Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCMs), taking place across the Diocese, present a great opportunity for congregations both to pray for and to engage with ‘Capital Vision 2020’. Attached as an appendix to this letter is an invitation for APCMs to set aside time to pray that as a Diocese we may be more ‘Confident’, ‘Creative’ and ‘Compassionate’. There is also a suggestion for time to be set aside to consider, for instance, what it means to be ambassadors for Jesus Christ in daily life. Please read this appendix (no. 3), and draw it to the attention of your parish priest.

This letter takes the form of the usual Annual Letter sent out at around this time of year. It has information on APCMs, Elections, PCCs, any changes in the rules governing these, and other information which may be useful.

1  Deanery Synod Elections - at this year’s APCMs

(a) Elections of deanery synod representatives for the new term (i.e. from 1 June 2014 to 31 May 2017)

Elections to deanery synods are due to take place at this year’s Annual Parochial Church Meetings. At the end of last year, I sent you details of the number of representatives to be elected by your parish. Please note that this may be different to the previous allocation. (For the 2011-2014 term the ‘Scale’ was 1 rep for every 75 on the election roll. For the 2014-2017 term, it is 1 rep for every 57 on the electoral roll. The electoral roll figure used is the figure as declared at the 2013 APCM). Note that the number of representatives remains the same throughout the 3 year term.

With regard to the election itself, nominations must be invited for all of the places allocated to the parish, and the number of persons elected must not exceed the number of places allocated.
(b) **The Diocese of London website – schedule on parish representatives**

A schedule containing the number of parish representatives on the deanery synod to which parishes are entitled can be found on the diocesan website. You can consult this at any time throughout the 3 year term if you should need to check the number of representatives for your parish on the deanery synod.

2 **2015 Elections: to the General Synod / to the Diocesan Synod etc..**

This time next year, preparations will be underway for these important elections in the life of the church. Elections of the General Synod take place every 5 years, and to the Diocesan Synod and other diocesan councils and committees – such as Area Councils, every 3 years.

The Houses of Laity of the deanery synods are the electors in these elections (they nominate candidates and then, if voting is required, vote for them). Those elected to the deanery synods in this year’s elections at the APCMs will be the electors in next year’s General and Diocesan Synod elections.

It will be important that the results of the deanery synod elections (i.e. the names and contact details of those elected) are entered accurately on the diocesan database, via the parish annual returns, and that any *subsequent changes during the year*, are updated.

If changes in your parish’s deanery synod representation occur after the parish annual return has been completed, (e.g. if one of the representatives resigns, or if a vacancy is filled), please could details of these changes be emailed to your Area/Archdeaconry office *straight away* for updating on the diocesan database. It is important that the database records of deanery synod membership is kept constantly up to date. Your assistance in achieving this would be very much appreciated.

3 **Electoral Rolls**

2013 saw the preparation of new church electoral rolls, which meant that everyone had to come off the roll and re-apply. This takes place only once in every six years. The next occasion for the preparation of new rolls will therefore be in 2019.

In the intervening years, i.e. this year, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 the usual annual Revision of the rolls takes place.

A sample schedule, based on a hypothetical APCM date of 22 April, showing the minimum periods in the revision timescale can be downloaded from the following link on the diocesan website: [http://www.london.anglican.org/kb/electoral-roll](http://www.london.anglican.org/kb/electoral-roll).

4 **PCCs**

Below in (a) and (b) is a recap on two significant changes in the Church Representation Rules which took place in 2004 relating to PCCs:
(a) **Number of lay representatives on the PCC, i.e. the formula now in force**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number on Electoral Roll</th>
<th>Number of representatives to be elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 or less</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 – 100</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101–200</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 200</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that parishes are permitted to set a different number of lay representatives to elect, (e.g. a parish with an electoral roll of 101-200 may consider 10 rather than 12 representatives to be more appropriate). This is done by passing a resolution at the APCM. Any such resolution, however, will only take effect from the following APCM.

(b) **Term of office of elected lay members of the PCC**

The length of time that an elected member serves on the PCC changed in 2004 from one year to three years, with a third of the PCC to be elected each year – unless the APCM decides to retain the system of annual election of the whole PCC. Such a decision, when taken, is effective in the year in which it is passed, and must be reviewed at least every six years.

(c) **Declaration that a person is not disqualified from being a PCC Member**

In order to assist in meeting statutory requirements, a Form of Declaration that a person is not disqualified from being a charity trustee, and therefore a PCC member, was produced in 2011 for use in parishes from that point onwards. A copy of the form can be obtained from the [diocesan website](#). Circumstances which disqualify a person from serving as a PCC member include, for example, being an undischarged bankrupt.

The form should be brought to the attention of

- Those standing for election to the PCC, deanery synod, and as churchwardens;
- Those elected verbally at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to the PCC, or deanery synod; and
- Other persons appointed as members of the PCC (e.g. co-options), and who have not signed a declaration confirming that they are not disqualified from being members of the PCC.

The form explains that

- Candidates standing for election to the PCC, deanery synod, or as churchwardens should read the declaration (in Section 4 of the Form), but need not sign it if they will be signing (or have signed) nomination forms which already contain the declaration (i.e. which include a reference to section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 (formerly section 72(1) of the Charities Act 1993)).
- The declaration should be signed by
(a) Those elected verbally at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to the PCC or deanery synod; and
(b) Others appointed to serve as members of the PCC (e.g. co-options), who have not signed a declaration confirming that they are not disqualified from being members of the PCC.

What should be done with the Form of Declaration?

Sufficient copies of the form should be provided

- Alongside nomination forms for those standing for election to the PCC, deanery synod, or as churchwardens; and
- During or after the APCM, for anyone elected to the PCC or deanery synod verbally at the meeting to sign;

(Ideally, when a verbal request for nominations is made at the APCM, it should be announced at that point that those offering themselves should be satisfied that they are not disqualified from serving as a member of the PCC. (Note that deanery synod members are automatically members of the PCC)).

5 After the APCM

(a) Parish Annual Returns

A Parish Annual Return is completed each year by every parish. It is the means of collecting information required by the bishops, archdeacons, diocesan officers, and the committees of the Archbishops’ Council, to assist in their various responsibilities for planning and administering the affairs of the Church at its different levels.

The Annual Return should be completed online as soon as possible after your APCM, and in any event, must be completed by 31 May. (Note that when completing the Return online, it need not be filled out in one sitting, but the different parts can be filled out at different times).

Please contact your Area/Archdeaconry Office if you experience any difficulty with the online process.

(b) Parish Annual Report and Accounts

PCCs are governed by the Church Representation Rules, Rule 9 (4) of which states that, after the APCM, the PCC

shall cause copies of the annual report and financial statements to be sent within twenty-eight days of the annual meeting to the secretary of the [London Diocesan Fund] for retention by the [Diocese]

Failure to submit accounts before 1 June means that all members of the PCC are in breach of their duty as trustees.

On-line submission of accounts and report

Parishes should submit their annual accounts and report online. They will need to certify electronically that the copies being sent in electronic form are an accurate copy
of the accounts which have been approved by the PCC and signed by the chairman presiding at the meeting. (Please note that the electronic certification will also constitute a declaration that the accounts have been signed off with an unqualified report by either the Independent Examiner or the Auditor).

**Registered Charities**
Parishes with income of over £100,000 must now be registered with the Charity Commission. Such PCCs must also submit their accounts and reports to the Charity Commission as well as to the Diocese. In addition to providing the Charity Commission with their annual report and accounts, they must also complete a ‘Charity Commission Annual Return’. The Charity Commission will e-mail a reminder to the nominated contact about this.

**Personal liability**
The PCC is a charity (whether registered or not) and all PCC members are classed as trustees. As trustees, the PCC’s members are not normally personally liable for the activities of the parish. However, as the Charity Commission’s website makes clear, if the trustees act imprudently, or are otherwise in breach of the law or the governing document, the position is different. Here, trustees may be personally responsible for liabilities incurred by the charity, or for making good any loss to the charity. Since trustees act collectively in running a charity, they will usually be collectively responsible to meet any such liability. Failing to keep proper records and accounts, to prepare annual statements or failing to submit accounts on time could well be considered to be an example of acting imprudently or in breach of law. A further impact of not filing accounts is that charity status could be withdrawn / suspended, and this would mean the PCC being unable to make Gift Aid claims, which would present a serious problem.

*Please draw this section of the letter to the attention of your PCC Treasurer.*

6 **Churchwardens Measure 2001**

**Disqualification after six periods of office (Section 3)**
The following note is based on one which was included in mailings of ‘Ministry Matters’ sent to clergy in the Diocese in 2008. They were asked to note that:

A person is disqualified from being appointed to the office of churchwarden when he or she has served as churchwarden of the same parish for six years in succession. A person must have a gap of at least two years before serving again.

However, the Annual Meeting of Parishioners can pass a resolution to the effect that this section of the Measure shall not apply, which would allow the person in question to be appointed after the six years has expired. Such a resolution would take effect immediately. The end of the first six year period, since this rule came into effect, was the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held in 2008.

This therefore meant that any churchwarden who had served continuously since the Annual Meeting of Parishioners of 2002 could not be re-appointed in 2008 unless the
Meeting had passed a resolution specifically overruling this provision in relation to the parish, which would enable him or her to be reappointed.

Any such resolution can be revoked by a subsequent Annual Meeting of Parishioners.

The intention of the legislation appears to be that six successive terms should normally be regarded as the maximum, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

If necessary, advice can be obtained from the Diocesan Registrar.

7 The Role of PCC Secretary

(a) A presentation which may help you in your role as PCC Secretary can be located at: http://www.london.anglican.org/kb/pcc-secretaries. This was given to a gathering of PCC Secretaries and Churchwardens.

A list of publications which may also provide some help is provided in Appendix 2.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on any of the above matters, on monica.bolley@london.anglican.org.

I am sending copies of this letter to those noted below. Please share the contents of this letter with your parish priest, and other church officers. Where appropriate please also pass on a copy to the secretaries of any district church council associated with your parish.

With kind regards
Yours sincerely

Monica Bolley
Synodical Secretary

Copies emailed to:
Archdeacons, the General Secretary, Diocesan Registrar, Incumbents and Priests-in-Charge, Churchwardens, Treasurers, Parish Administrators, Electoral Roll Officers, Area Deans, Deanery Lay Chairs, Deanery Synod Secretaries, Area Directors of Training and Development, Area Finance Advisers and Area Office Staff.

Note to PCC Secretaries:
In view of the increased use of email, and its benefits including the reduction in diocesan postage costs, this letter is now being sent by email to those PCC Secretaries for whom we have an email address. Those not on email are being sent copies by post.

Appendix 1

Forms for Parish Annual Meetings

The following documents can be located on the diocesan website.

(a) Electoral Roll
   • Electoral Roll application form
• Electoral Roll certificate for display in church
• Notice of Revision of Electoral Roll
• Sample of timetable for Revision of Electoral Roll

(b) **Other Forms relating to Parish Annual Meetings**
• Notice of Annual Parochial Church Meeting
• Notice of Meeting of Parishioners - for Election of Churchwarden
• Nomination Form for Election to the PCC
• Nomination Form for Election to the Deanery Synod
• Nomination Form for Election of Churchwardens
• Results of Elections – Notice for display

(b) **Parish Representation on Deanery Synods – Schedule of Numbers**
(c) **The Role of PCC Secretaries – copy of a presentation on the legalities and practicalities**
can be located at: [http://www.london.anglican.org/kb/pcc-secretaries](http://www.london.anglican.org/kb/pcc-secretaries).

Appendix 2

**Publications for PCC secretaries**

(a) **Church Representation Rules 2011**
I would encourage all parishes to acquire a copy of the Church Representation Rules 2011 (ISBN 978 0 7151 1041 6). These Rules comprise Schedule 3 of the Synodical Government Measure 1969, together with subsequent amendments. They contain a wealth of information including details on the governance of PCCs, Parochial Church Meetings, deanery synods, as well as information on Electoral Roll formation, maintenance, revision and renewal.

The Church Representation Rules 2011 have recently been made available electronically, and can be accessed via the [diocesan website](http://www.london.anglican.org/kb/pcc-secretaries).

(b) **Other useful publications**
• An ABC for the PCC – A Handbook for Church Council Members (John Pitchford) ISBN 0-8264-6599-4
• A Basic Church Dictionary and Compendium (Compiled by Tony Meakin) ISBN 1-85311-087-6
• Your Church and the Law (A simple explanation and guide) – David Parrott ISBN 978-1-85311-927-9

All of these publications are available from Church House Bookshop, 31 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN (tel: 020 7898 1300 / [www.chbookshop.co.uk](http://www.chbookshop.co.uk)).
Capital Vision 2020

*Please raise with your Parish Priest the following...............*

At your APCM, to consider setting aside a brief time to pray and reflect on our city and our vision of a church that is in 2020, Christ centred and outward looking. To pray that as a Diocese we will be

- More confident in speaking and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- More compassionate in serving communities with the love of God the Father
- More creative in reaching new people and places with the Good News in the power of the Spirit

At your APCM, as you review the life of your parish in 2013, and look forward to the rest of 2014 and beyond, to consider setting aside time to include one or more of the following in your meeting:

- As we consider being ambassadors for Jesus Christ in daily life consider including a *This time tomorrow*’ slot where a member of the congregation shares what they do during the week, how they approach it as a Christian and the challenges they face.
- Ask the congregation, perhaps in twos or threes, to reflect on how your church building is open during the week to the community and how this has engaged the community.
- As we seek to double the number of young people involved in local Christian community – take soundings from those present on what it would take to double the number of young people involved in your church – from 4 to 8 or 50 to 100, by 2020?
- Consider how to encourage members of the congregation to each pray for seven people that we may share with them the story of our faith. Seek the ideas of those present.

**RESOURCES**

If you would like any Capital Vision resources to share at your APCM please email capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org. Capital Vision foldout leaflets and postcards are readily available. A3 Posters can also be ordered for a notice board or wall display. The film is still available for you to download and show.

There are resources which are being made available to help you with your ongoing plans. More resources are planned over the coming months – including support for opening up church buildings and an app and card for praying for seven people. Here are just three resources to consider:
1. Every church in the Diocese is invited to attend a one day workshop for clergy and key lay members of your church – starting our journey to **equipping and commissioning 100,000 ambassadors for everyday life**. Those who attend are asked to feed back to their parishes how they might take this forward [Book to join the workshop on 15th or 31st March](#).

2. We’re trying to start 10 new Messy Churches across the Diocese in 2014. Two are already in planning – could you plan to be next? If you are interested in starting a Messy Church and taking advantage of what is on offer through a new partnership then please email Sam Donoghue, Children’s Ministry Adviser ([sam.donoghue@london.anglican.org](mailto:sam.donoghue@london.anglican.org)).

   Support available includes a training evening for volunteers, a free starter pack of resources, a review meeting to help develop the group once established and access to the Messy Church network with meet ups, and peer support. There are also start up grants of £250 available to help buy craft resources to get you started.

3. **Thinking about a new worshipping community for 2014 or beyond?** Check out the library of videos from the first 3 new worshipping communities – and be inspired - [100 worshipping communities on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com). Or watch how [Islington Deanery](https://www.islingtondeanery.org) approached planning.

   If you have updated your Mission Action Plan to reflect Capital Vision 2020, do please email a copy to [capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org](mailto:capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org) so your ideas and actions can be shared more widely as stories of confident, compassionate and creative churches are shared across the Diocese.

**Finally, please hold in prayer…..**

Each of the 10 [Capital Vision 2020 priorities](#). Each priority is sponsored by one of the Bishops or Archdeacons who would love to hear how you are taking it forward and connect you with others with similar stories or ideas. Email [capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org](mailto:capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org).

Debbie Clinton, Capital Vision Manager
[Debbie.clinton@london.anglican.org](mailto:Debbie.clinton@london.anglican.org)
February 2014