Annual Letter to PCC Secretaries

27 February 2015

Dear PCC Secretary

Welcome to those of you who are new to the role of PCC Secretary, and thank you all; newcomers and older hands, for shouldering 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 2013, 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. As mentioned in last year’s letter:

The 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 (3) 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 – as St Paul implores us - to be ambassadors for Jesus Christ in our daily lives. Please read Appendix 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 2015: General Synod and Diocesan Synod Elections

Preparations are now underway for these important elections in the life of the church.

Elections to the General Synod take place every 5 years, and to the Diocesan Synod - followed by elections to other diocesan councils and committees such as Area Councils - every 3 years.

The General Synod is the national assembly of the Church of England, which came into being in 1970. It is both a deliberative and legislative body, having been given power by Parliament to pass ‘Measures’ which, on approval by Parliament, become part of the law of the land. In this year’s elections there are places for 11 clergy and 11 lay representatives for this Diocese.
The Diocesan Synod and Area Councils are made up of representatives of the clergy and laity, who meet together regularly throughout the year with the bishops and archdeacons, to discuss matters and make decisions which take forward mission and ministry in the Diocese.

It is important that those elected to the General Synod, Diocesan Synod and Area Councils reflect the richness of the diversity of our Diocese, including black and minority ethnic Anglicans.

Visit nearer the time: https://churchofengland.org/ and http://www.london.anglican.org/

2 Deanery Synods: Lay members

(a) As electors

The houses of laity of the deanery synods (apart from co-opted members) are the electors in the above elections. This means that those elected to the deanery synods in last year’s elections at the APCMs, and any subsequent elections to fill vacancies, will be entitled to nominate candidates and cast votes (where voting is required) in this year’s General and Diocesan Synod, and Area Council elections.

*Note that in these elections, lay candidates are from parishes and do not need to be on deanery synods.*

Parishes with vacancies on the deanery synod have been informed, and they are encouraged to see to these being filled where possible.

(b) Swift and accurate reporting on newly elected members

To enable newly elected deanery synod members to be included in the 2015 elections, those responsible for passing on the information are asked to endeavour to do so as quickly as possible please, and with special care over accuracy. Please enter details of the name, postal and email addresses and (if available) telephone number onto the diocesan database either online, or by informing the Area/archdeaconry office (see Note 2 below for email addresses). Please do not wait until the rest of the information for your Annual Return is ready.

(c) Term of office: 1 June 2014 to 31 May 2017

The main elections to deanery synods took place at last year’s Annual Parochial Church Meetings. At the end of 2013, I sent PCC secretaries details of the number of representatives to be elected by the parish. Please note that this may have been 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 this 3 year term, i.e. from 1 June 2014 to 31 May 2017.

(d) Not exceeding allocation

With regard to both the main election and any elections to fill vacancies, note that the
number of persons elected must not exceed the number of places allocated for the parish. We are aware of certain parishes which have elected more members than their allocation allows, and this is being addressed directly with those parishes.

(e) 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.

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, 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.

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>
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<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 (i.e. higher or lower) 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).

One important element this year is that parishes were asked to complete the ‘Statistics for Mission’ section of the Return by Saturday 31 January 2015. This section includes attendance data for Easter, October and Christmas.

We are also asking parishes to submit as part of this year’s Annual Return their electoral roll figure as at the 2014 APCM (even though parishes will have already supplied this as part of last year’s Return). This is to enable the London Diocese electoral roll data to be brought in line with data used by the National Church’s statistics team.

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 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.

Notes:

1 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.

2 Area /Archdeaconry offices

- London Archdeaconry: Tracey McLeavy, tracey.mcleavey@london.anglican.org
- Charing Cross Archdeaconry: Pam Nicholls, pam.nicholls@london.anglican.org
- Stepney Area: Jenny Harding, jenny.harding@london.anglican.org
- Kensington Area: Fiona Holmer, kao@london.anglican.org
- Edmonton Area: Nina Basmajeva, pa.adhampstead@london.anglican.org
- Willesden Area: Anne Davies, wao@london.anglican.org

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

(c) **Parish Representation on Deanery Synods – Schedule of Numbers**

(d) **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**

- A Basic Church Dictionary and Compendium (Compiled by Tony Meakin) ISBN 1-85311-087-6

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 2014, and look forward to the rest of 2015 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? Or build on the 2015 Lent Appeal and share stories and thank God for those who inspired you to faith when you were younger.
- 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.
- Consider if your parish might participate in this year’s week of prayer across the Diocese starting on 18th May and leading up to Pentecost. Parishes might book to come to St Paul’s Cathedral and pray in a dedicated prayer space or commit to an hour or more of prayer locally using the same themes. Resources and booking will be available soon, for more details email capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org

**RESOURCES**

If you would like any Capital Vision resources to share at your APCM please email capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org. Capital Vision foldout leaflets are readily available. A3
Posters can also be ordered for a notice board or wall display. A short film reviewing a year since the launch of Capital Vision is also available.

There are resources which are available to help you with your ongoing plans. Here are just a few resources to consider:

1. **Ambassadors website** is a hub of resources for churches considering how to equip and commission people to live out their faith in daily life. Also available is a printed publication called Voice of Hope for ambassadors which includes an introduction from the Bishop of London, ambassador profiles, messages and stories and 40 days of devotionals. If your church would like free copies of Voice of Hope or to join a workshop on ambassadors, email capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org.

2. **Have you signed up to the Diocese of London’s Children’s Charter?** The Children’s Charter is a scheme set up to help your parish develop the welcome you offer to children. By signing up you will be making a significant statement about the importance of children in your church and joining a network of London parishes from many different places and traditions who are trying to do the same. Signing up is a commitment to welcome children into the heart of our congregations and think deeply about our mission to them. We’re hoping that 100% of parishes will make this commitment by 2020.

3. Free resources for those leading Children’s and Youth Ministry in your parish
   - Children’s Ministry and Youth Ministry Newsletters - These include a mixture of details of the training courses we are running, news on resources and articles about good practice. You can sign up to receive the newsletters here.

4. Thinking about how to open your church to the community in new ways? An Open Churches toolkit has recently been launched and is available on the Diocesan website. A forthcoming workshop called An Open Presence – Sure Foundations from Tradition and Scripture is open to all and booking is now open.

5. Would your parish like to focus on each member of the congregation praying for seven people? Pray for seven bookmarks are available by emailing capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org or the PrayerMate app is available to download.

If you have updated your Mission Action Plan to reflect Capital Vision 2020, do please email a copy to 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.

Debbie Clinton, Capital Vision Manager
debbie.clinton@london.anglican.org
February 2015