

## *Annual Letter to PCC Secretaries*

1 February 2013

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, as we are about to launch, in June, 'Capital Vision 2020', our vision for how, together, we serve Jesus Christ in London.

Following the launch of 'Capital Vision 2020', each PCC will want to explore what 'Capital Vision 2020' means in the life of the parish. You, as PCC Secretary, alongside your parish clergy and churchwardens, will be involved in starting - and indeed taking forward with the congregation - the conversation in your parish.

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

The most important information to draw to your attention this year, is the renewal of church electoral rolls, which is where everyone comes off the electoral roll, and it starts afresh.

## **1 2013 Renewal of Electoral Rolls**

The General Secretary, Andy Brookes wrote to parish priests in November - copied to yourselves as PCC Secretaries - as follows:

'Many of you are well versed in the six yearly renewing of electoral rolls. If so, skip ahead a few paragraphs to the changes we are making in 2013.

For those who are new to this, some background.

Each year around APCM time individuals have the opportunity to join the electoral rolls of our churches (with a small number resigning if they take the trouble). Every six years each church's electoral roll is redone from scratch, with all members having to sign up afresh. You need to make this happen in early 2013, getting all your flock to sign an electoral roll form.

This is more than just a statistical clean-up.

In the past 20 years, electoral rolls in the London Diocese have grown 60-70%. (The exact number depends on the base year; see [Another Capital Idea](#) for more details.) Any of you who have used this statistic with your congregations will know the encouragement and surprise it generates. However, we can only make this statement because each church does the collection work – **thank you**; and it is important to ensure that electoral rolls are realistic.

Under London Challenge many of the successes were achieved through our working together: on Fairtrade, the environment, the 2012 and much more. Our Capital Vision 2020 will build on this theme. We need to continue to do more together.

### **Changes in 2013**

Many participants in Capital Vision engagement workshops asked us to raise our communications game. The ability to communicate further encouragement direct to members of electoral rolls will aid that objective.

The statutory electoral roll application form does not collect email addresses or phone numbers, but to enable that improvement in our communication to happen, a new box headed 'Additional Information' has been added at the end of the form. This contains an invitation to the electoral roll applicant to provide their email address and telephone number.

As you know, this information is vital to the smooth functioning of a parish. We also want to be able to use these email addresses to share, on behalf of the Bishop of London, important news and events in the life of the Church in the Diocese of London.

You should note that the request for 'Additional Information' has been worded to reflect best practice and covers use of the information provided both by the parish and by the Bishop.

**Please use the new form**, which should replace any used in the past, or if you prefer you can simply copy and paste the new box on to the end of your existing statutory form.

The mechanism for transferring electoral roll information to us will be a straightforward upload of a simple spreadsheet through a secure website. But this is for another day. The important thing is that **your church include the new box for 'Additional Information' provided on the electoral roll form.**

Documents to help with the preparation of your new electoral roll are attached: the application form, a notice to be displayed, plus a quick guide and a more detailed guide to the process. These documents – and many more relating to APCMs – are available on the [diocesan website](#).

## 2 Deanery Synods

### (a) Term of Office

The term of office of deanery synod representatives is 3 years, from 1 June 2011 to 31 May 2014. The number of parish representatives on the deanery synod *remains the same* throughout the three year period.

### (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. (Note that the number of representatives remain the same throughout the 3 year term.)

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

These elections are due to take place at next year's Annual Parochial Church Meetings (i.e. at APCMs in 2014). At the end of this year, in December, after the Diocesan Synod has agreed the scales of representation on deanery synods to be applied across the Diocese, I will be sending you details of the number of representatives to be elected by your parish. Please note that this may be different to the current allocation. The new schedule of parish representatives for the Diocese will also, in December, be made available on the diocesan website.

## 3 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

Number on Electoral Roll	Number of representatives to be elected
50 or less	6
51 – 100	9
101–200	12
over 200	15

Note that parishes are permitted to set a different number of lay representatives to elect. 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)).

## 4 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 - ideally online - as soon as possible after your APCM, and in any event, must be completed by 1 June. (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).

Annual Returns being submitted as hard-copies, should be sent to your Archdeaconry / Area Office once completed.

### (b) Parish Annual Report and Accounts

PCCs are governed by the Churches 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 are strongly encouraged to 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.*

## **5 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.

## **6 The Role of PCC Secretary**

A presentation which may help you in your role as PCC Secretary can be found on the [diocesan website](#). 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](mailto: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 Preparation of new Roll
- Preparation of new Electoral Roll in 2013: detailed notes
- Preparation of new Electoral Roll in 2013: quick guide

**(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
- Notice of Revision of the Church Electoral Roll
- Application for enrolment on the Electoral Roll
- Church Electoral Roll Certificate (for display in church)

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

**(d) The Role of PCC Secretaries – copy of a presentation on the legalities and practicalities**

## **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](#).

### **(b) Other useful publications**

- A Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors (Kenneth MacMorran and Timothy Briden) ISBN 0-819-28111-5
- Practical Church Management – A Guide for every Parish (James Behrens) ISBN 0-85244-602-0 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)
- 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)).