



LONDON DIOCESAN FUND

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Annual Letter to PCC Secretaries

March 2010

Dear PCC Secretary

Welcome to those of you who are new to the role of PCC Secretary. 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 any other useful information.

1 **PCCs and Annual Parochial Church Meetings**

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:¹

(a) **Number of lay representatives on the PCC – 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) **Parish Annual Returns**

These should be completed online as soon as possible after your Annual Parochial Church Meeting (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). The website went live from March 15th. Parishes that cannot complete their returns online should download a copy from the site, the address for which is <http://raphael.london.anglican.org>, or request a paper copy from the Area / Archdeaconry office as soon as possible.

The section on energy consumption is being retained because the information that it provided has enabled some useful and interesting analysis. Brian Cuthbertson,

¹ For further information, for instance, on how elected members to the PCC change from a one to three year term of office, please refer to the letter to PCC Secretaries for 2004. This can be found on the Diocesan Intranet, (please follow the directions provided in paragraph 7 below) together with letters for other years starting from 2001. (Note that no letter was sent in 2007, as the General Secretary had already written to parishes concerning the preparation of the new electoral roll).

Head of Environmental Challenge at LDF, has calculated that from 2005 to 2008 12% of energy use has been saved, and carbon emissions reduced by 11.4%.

(d) **Parish Annual Report and Accounts**

Parishes are reminded of Rule 9(4) on the sending in of the parish's annual report and accounts to the diocese.

This Rule 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 diocesan board of finance for retention by the board.

The London Diocesan Fund is the diocesan board of finance for London for these purposes.

Parishes are strongly encouraged to submit their annual report and accounts 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).

Parishes that are not submitting their annual accounts online must still send paper copies to the Archdeaconry / Area Office by 1 June. Parishes which are registered with the Charity Commission are reminded that they also need to complete the Charity Commission's returns and send the Commission copies of their signed and audited (or examined) report and accounts. Note that any PCC with annual income of over £100k should be registered.

The PCC is a charity and the PCC members are its 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 books of account and to prepare annual statements as required by the rules could well be considered to be an example of acting imprudently or in breach of law.

Note that the members of all PCCs are trustees, regardless of whether the PCC is registered. What appears in the previous paragraph therefore applies to the members of all PCCs.

It would be appreciated if you would draw this section of the letter to the attention of your PCC Treasurer.

2 **Electoral Rolls**

After the preparation of new electoral rolls in 2007, the rolls now need only to be revised until the next year of preparation, which is 2013.

A form of notice for the revision of the electoral roll can be found on the Diocesan Intranet², as can a copy of the Church Electoral Roll certificate for display in church.

² Other forms relating to the APCM can also be found on the Diocesan Intranet. These are listed at the end of this letter.

3 **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 two years ago. 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 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 Meetings held in 2008.

This therefore meant that any churchwarden who had served continuously since the Annual Meeting of 2002 could not be re-appointed in 2008 unless the Annual 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.

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.

4 **Elections**

(a) **The General Synod**

2010 is an important election year in the Diocese, and indeed the whole country, as fresh elections to the General Synod will be taking place. This Diocese has been allocated places to elect 10 clerical and 10 lay representatives.

What is General Synod?

The General Synod is the national assembly of the Church of England. It came into being in 1970 under the Synodical Government Measure 1969, replacing an earlier body known as the Church Assembly. It continues a tradition of Synodical government which, in England, has its origins in the medieval period. The Synod is both a deliberative and a legislative body, having been given power by Parliament to pass 'Measures' which (on approval by Parliament) become part of the law of the land.

How is it elected?

Directly elected members of the House of Clergy are elected by the clergy of their dioceses and directly elected members of the House of Laity by the lay members of the deanery synods (except co-opted members).

You will note I have underlined that it is the 'lay members of the deanery synods' (except co-opted members), that elect members to the House of Laity of the General Synod. This affects parishes, because it is from here that lay members of the deanery synods are elected.

(b) **Deanery Synods**

Parish representatives on the deanery synod were elected at APCMs in 2008. Your attention is drawn to the following points:

- **Term of Office**

The term of office of the deanery synod representatives is three years, from 1 June 2008 to 31 May 2011. The number of parish representatives on the deanery synod remains the same throughout the three year period.

- **The Diocese of London Intranet – 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 Diocese of London Intranet (see paragraph 7)³. Please consult this at any time throughout the three year term of office if you should need to check the number of representatives for your parish on the deanery synod.

- **When a person steps down from the Deanery Synod or PCC – i.e. when a ‘Casual Vacancy’ occurs**

Church Representation Rule 48 provides guidance on filling casual vacancies:

‘Casual vacancies among the parochial representatives elected to the PCC or deanery synod shall be filled as soon as practicable after the vacancy has occurred. Where the APCM is not due to be held within the next two months following the occurrence of the vacancy, a vacancy among the parochial representatives elected to the PCC may be filled, and a vacancy among the parochial representatives elected to the deanery synod shall be filled, by the election by the PCC of a person qualified to be so elected.’

From the explanation regarding the General Synod election given above (in 4(a)), the importance of the Diocesan database records of parish representatives on the deanery synod being accurate is made clear. We are reliant on your assistance, (and that of churchwardens, to whom a separate note is also being sent) to ensure that the entries of your parish's lay elected representatives on the deanery synod are correct, and that any changes made are updated immediately afterwards.

This should, if possible, be done online by an officer in your parish who has the entry login, such as you yourself, the churchwardens, or the PCC treasurer. Otherwise, please notify the Archdeaconry/Area Office by email or by first class letter of the change.

- **Deanery Synod Membership and Ex-officio status**

Members of deanery synods are ex-officio members of their Parochial/Guild Church Councils for the duration of their term of office on the deanery synod.

(c) **Elections – diversity in representation**

At a meeting of the Diocesan Synod, it was pointed out that:

It is important for the rich diversity of the church in London to be reflected on all synodical bodies, including the representation of black and minority ethnic Anglicans.

³ Access address: <http://gabriel.london.anglican.org>. Under ‘Public Information’ select ‘Parish Annual Meetings’.

This includes representation of the diocese on the General Synod, due to take place this year. Members of your congregation should start to consider whether they might wish to stand in the General Synod election or encourage others to stand. Please consult the Church of England website (www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod) for information on the General Synod.

5 Publications

(a) Church Representation Rules 2006

I would encourage all parishes to acquire a copy of the Church Representation Rules 2006 (ISBN 0 7151 1012 8). 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.

(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 (2nd 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).

6 The Role of PCC Secretary

Material which may help you in your role as PCC Secretary can be found in the form of a copy of a presentation which was given to a gathering of PCC Secretaries and Churchwardens. This can be found on the Diocesan Intranet. (Please follow the directions provided in paragraph 7 below.)

7 Forms for Parish Annual Meetings

The following documents can be located on the Diocese of London Intranet. This is accessed using the following address: <http://gabriel.london.anglican.org>. The page which appears has three headings, one of which is 'Public Information'. From the list under this heading, select the link, 'Parish Annual Meetings'. Please then click on the document you require from the list which appears:

(a) 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 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)

- (b) **Parish Representation on Deanery Synods – Schedule of Numbers**
- (c) **Annual Letters to PCC Secretaries (from 2001 to date)**
- (d) **The Role of PCC Secretaries – copy of a presentation on the legalities and practicalities**

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 also share the contents of this letter with 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, 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, not least in the reduction in diocesan postage costs, this letter is now being sent by email (except to those who, as a result of last year's letter, informed me that they wished to continue receiving a paper copy). If you are not on email, and wish to receive a paper copy please contact me on: tel - 020 7932 1228 / or by letter to the above address.