

Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCMs) 2021

A guide to conducting your APCM - FAQs.

This document has been put together following some of the most frequently asked questions that have risen in the past 2 years. You should always refer to the Church Representation Rules ([CRRs](#)) where most answers can be found.

Section 1. General

Why are two separate meetings needed?

Every parish is legally required to hold an Annual Parish Meeting to elect Churchwardens and an Annual Parochial Church Meeting to conduct other parish business. These are required under statute through the Church Representation Rules.

When should these meetings be held?

These would normally be held between the 1st January and 31st May of each year (as announced in CRRs revision 2020). However, there is now specific guidance relating to the extension granted under the Bishop's Instrument to respond to Covid measures, allowing an extension in 2021 and therefore the date has been extended to **31st July 2021**.

What if there are genuine reasons that it is not possible to hold these meetings within that time frame?

You should be in touch with your Archdeacon for advice as soon as possible.

Area Archdeacons' Office

- [Dorchester Archdeaconry](#)
- [Oxford Archdeaconry](#)
- [Buckingham Archdeaconry](#)
- [Berkshire Archdeaconry](#)

Who should we invite to these meetings?

For the Annual Parish Meeting any member of the civil electoral roll of the civil parish(es) or someone on the electoral roll of the parish church(es) can attend and for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting it is anyone on the electoral roll of the parish church(es) only.

Who will chair the APCM?

The minister of the parish chairs the APCM, or if he/she is not present, the vice-chair of the PCC. (See CRR M4 for further details.)

Section 2. Election of Churchwardens

a) How many should be elected and for how long?

Two churchwardens should be elected for 1 year only for each parish.

Where a parish has more than one parish church and/or parish centre of worship (designated under section 43 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, section 1(2) of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 provides for **two churchwardens to be appointed for each parish church/parish centre of worship.**

Each candidate for election as a churchwarden must be nominated and seconded in writing by individuals entitled to attend the meeting (ie. the nominee and seconder must be two different individuals).

b) Can anyone serve as a churchwarden?

There are certain eligibility requirements to be met in order to be able to serve as a churchwarden; these are details on the reverse of the Churchwarden Nomination form.

c) What if there is only one candidate?

The one candidate will be elected unopposed and you should let your relevant Archdeacon know that you have been unsuccessful in filling both posts.

d) How should an election be conducted?

It is very important that elections are conducted properly. If there are more than 2 candidates standing there will need to be an election. The Church Representation Rules state that votes in elections can be given:

a) by show of hands

if one or more persons object on voting papers signed by the voter on the reverse thereof.

Therefore if an election is likely it is best to prepare before the meeting for the possibility of a ballot using election papers, since only 1 person needs to request it!

Please note that you must ask the voter to sign the ballot paper. Unsigned papers will therefore be INVALID. For identification purpose we would advise that you ask people to print their names for ease of identification. Any persons who do not qualify for attendance at the meeting cannot vote.

There are rights of appeal to the Deanery and to the Diocese if any person believes that an election has been conducted improperly or unfairly.

e) Is there a restriction on how long a churchwarden can continue to be eligible for election?

The Churchwardens' Measure 2001 created a 6-year restriction the effects of which began to be relevant in 2008. Therefore, currently a churchwarden may not be elected as a churchwarden for the same parish for a continuous period of more than 6 years since any continuous service prior to 2002 is ignored. Where an individual has served as a churchwarden for 6 continuous years, they must not stand for election for at least one year. Following a break of at least one year, the individual may then stand for election as a churchwarden.

The Annual Parish Meeting can vote to opt out of this restriction, but it must be done in advance of any such candidate standing for election. Any opt out by the Annual Parish Meeting holds until a subsequent similar meeting decides to opt back in.

f) Can we appoint Deputy or Assistant Church Wardens?

Deputy Churchwardens of district churches or places of worship other than parish churches are legally recognised under the Church Representation Rules and if appointed have ex-officio status on PCCs. However, it should be recognised that they are not the Bishop's officer and they do not have the same legal status as churchwardens – they purely exercise functions designated to them. They will be elected in the same way as churchwardens.

Assistant Churchwardens and those designated Deputy Churchwardens in places not covered above do not have legal status and therefore need not be subject to election.

Section 3. Elections

• What is the order for existing PCC members to step down?

Usually this is determined by the order in which they were elected – so that no-one serves more than 3 years at a time (*Note: this is the max term but will usually be renewable for one further term of 3 yrs.*). However, people will also become PCC members because they fill casual vacancies in the elected membership. Such people are either elected by the PCC to fill the casual vacancy or by a subsequent Annual Meeting. Any person so filling a casual vacancy takes up the unexpired term of the person who created the vacancy.

• What is a casual vacancy?

A casual vacancy can arise when a PCC member has resigned or been removed from office before the end of their term or where a vacancy was not filled because insufficient candidates stood at the time of election.

• How should casual vacancies be filled?

Casual vacancies that occur more than 2 months prior to the next Annual Meeting can be filled by an election of the PCC itself. Otherwise, the vacancy will be filled by election at the next Annual Meeting.

- **Can anyone stand for election as a PCC member?**

No there are certain criteria that have to be met. The requirements are set out on the nomination form.

- **Can PCC employees themselves be a member of that PCC?**

There are no longer any restrictions on this. A PCC member (or person connected to a PCC member e.g., their spouse) may provide services to the PCC under a contract of employment, provided that the conditions set out in section 185 of the Charities Act 2011 are met.

Any conflicts of interest arising as a result of an individual being a PCC member (or person connected to a PCC member) and also an employee of the PCC must be managed appropriately.

- **Are postal votes allowed?**

Only if the Annual Meeting has previously voted to allow these. The conduct of elections which include postal votes is included in the Church Representation Rules Rule M11.

- **What if there is a tie in the voting?**

If recounts still show a tie, then the successful candidate is determined by the drawing of lots.

- **Can people be co-opted to the PCC and if so how many can be co-opted?**

Yes, co-options are permitted by a vote of the PCC and their term is until the next annual meeting.

If you elect 6, 9 or 12 parish representatives then 2 co-options are permitted, if 15 parish representatives then 3 co-options are permitted.

- **Are Readers ex-officio members of PCC?**

The Church Representation Rules say that any such of the readers who are licensed to that parish or licensed to an area which includes that parish and whose names are on the [electoral] roll of that parish **as the annual meeting may determine**. Accordingly, their representation can effectively be changed by a resolution at the annual meeting.

Section 4. Holding your first PCC Meeting following elections

We are often asked questions about business that the first meeting of the newly formed PCC has to transact. Here are some of the most common questions that arise.

Frequently asked questions:

- **Who is the chair of the PCC?**

The minister is the chair of the PCC.

The PCC must elect a lay member as vice-chair and the vice-chair acts as chair

(i) where this is no minister;

(ii) where the minister is absent or unable to act for some other reason or;

(iii) where the minister invites the vice-chair to act as chair.

See CRR M19 for further details.

What appointments should the first PCC meeting make?

The PCC must appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer for the year ahead at its first meeting.

They should also appoint an Electoral Roll Officer.

Any co-opted members would also normally be approved at this meeting.

Who can be appointed as Treasurer?

The Treasurer does not legally have to be a PCC member. However, the PCC have a duty to satisfy themselves that their financial affairs are being properly managed. As a general rule of good governance, the PCC will have the right to ask questions of any Treasurer who is not a PCC member and will want regular updates on finances at each meeting. It would be normal therefore to co-opt any Treasurer who is appointed and who is not otherwise a member of PCC. The PCC will also want to satisfy themselves that the candidate for appointment as Treasurer has the necessary financial and bookkeeping key skills. In practice is a preferred option that the Treasurer would be a PCC member, but we recognise that may not always be possible.

What if we are unable to appoint a Treasurer?

One of the churchwardens would be required to act in this instance. However, this is a less than satisfactory arrangement and the PCC would be expected to make all reasonable efforts to secure the services of an appropriately qualified Treasurer as quickly as possible.

What is the Standing Committee?

The Church Representation Rules (CRRs) lay down that the PCC shall have a Standing Committee *[See CRR M31]*.

The Standing Committee may transact the PCC's business between meetings of the PCC, but may not discharge a duty of the PCC, and may not exercise a power of the PCC which is

subject to the passing of a resolution by the PCC or compliance by the PCC with some other requirement.

The number of individuals comprising the Standing Committee will depend on how many names are on the parish electoral roll on the date on which the Annual Parochial Church Meeting is held.

If there are more than 50 names on the electoral roll, the Standing Committee shall consist of the minister, each churchwarden who is a member of the PCC or, if there are more than two, such two or more churchwardens as are appointed by resolution of the PCC and at least two other members of the PCC appointed by resolution of the PCC (the number of which should be at least equal to the number of churchwardens on the Standing Committee).

If there are less than 50 names on the electoral roll, the Standing Committee shall consist of the minister and at least two other members of the PCC appointed by resolution of the PCC (these individuals may, but need not, be a churchwarden).

It may be helpful for parishes to consider whether it would be appropriate for the PCC Secretary and Treasurer to be members of the Standing Committee.