Being on the PCC

Paul wrote to the Church in Rome in these words:

‘I give this piece of advice to each one of you. Don’t cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you all... ...we, though many in number compose one body in Christ and are all members of one another. Through the grace of God we have different gifts. If our gift is preaching, let us preach to the limit of our vision. If it is serving others let us concentrate on our service; If it is teaching let us give all that we have to our teaching; and if our gift be the stimulating of the faith of others let us set ourselves to it. Let those who are called to give, give freely; let the person who wields authority think of his responsibility; and let the person who feels sympathy for his fellows act cheerfully.’

St Paul, writing to the Romans Ch12 v3-8 (JB Phillips – The New Testament in Modern English)

This is the spirit in which the PCC of St Mary’s tries to act, drawing on and encouraging the varied gifts that people bring to it.

For this to work, members of the PCC need to be:

* Interested in and involved with the life of the church and the local community
* Willing to learn and to share ideas, experience and gifts in order to forward St Mary’s mission and ministry
* Caring
* Able to listen to another’s point of view

In practise this means that a good PCC member will:

* Attend meetings (and be on time)
* Be prepared by reading the papers before the meeting
* Ask if in doubt (especially important for new members)
* Listen to all the arguments being put forward before making up their mind
* Seek timely help when carrying out a task so that it is not delayed
* Cherish their relationship with other members of the PCC
* And above all enjoy being a member of the PCC!

The PCC needs thinkers and doers, questioners and listeners.

You do not have to be a saint, a theologian or an expert, though nobody will mind if you are!

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary the Virgin, Linton

The rights and duties of the PCC are framed by the need for the incumbent and the Parochial Church Council to consult together on matters of general concern and importance in the parish. In practical terms this means that the PCC is responsible for the maintenance of the church buildings and churchyard and, with the incumbent, for deciding how the church's money is to be spent. The PCC has the right to be consulted about major changes to the forms of worship used in the parish, about the appointment of a new incumbent and any pastoral scheme affecting the parish.

Only those who have been on the Electoral Roll for six months are eligible to be members of the PCC. At St Mary’s Linton the PCC consists of up to twelve elected members. Two Deanery Synod representatives, the clergy and the two churchwardens are ex-officio members.

The roles within the Parochial Church Council are:

Chair Revd. Maggie Guite

Lay Vice Chair Dr David Parry-Smith

Secretary Sue Mudge

Treasurer Sue Ellis

Electoral Roll Officer Pam Richardson

Our Deanery Synod reps are Dr David Parry Smith

Mr Andrew Gore

The usual term served by PCC members is three years and then to have at least a year’s sabbatical before standing again. The members of the PCC are:

Elected 2016 Mrs Gill Fraser Lee

Dr Chris Morse

Mr John Organ

Mrs Linda Richardson

Miss Rebecca Richardson

Elected 2017 Mrs Sue Ellis

Mrs Colleen Lockstone

Mrs Sue Mudge

Mr John Thorne

Elected 2018 Mr Richard Tonry

Two places remain for co-option.

In order for the PCC to fulfil its remit it has a number of Sub Committees which have a mix of members of the PCC and other members of the congregation. The current committees are:

Events Chair Pam Richardson

Fabric Chair Andrew Gore

Finance and Stewardship Chair

The PCC meets every other month alternating between the 2nd Monday and the 2nd Thursday where possible. The Sub-Committees meet in the months in between. They report to the PCC at each meeting usually presenting a paper for discussion in good time to circulate before the meeting. This paper may be for information or there may be clearly argued recommendations for the PCC to vote on.

In addition to PCC and its sub-committees there is the also a standing committee made up of the Minister, Churchwardens, Lay Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and one other member which can, if needs be, take executive action in between PCC meetings.

The Incumbent meets with the Churchwardens on a regular basis to discuss the routine running of the parish.

The Parochial Church Council

What is it?

It’s a recent development (compared to the length of life of the church!)

Parochial Church Councils were first given legal status in 1919, before then the incumbent and Churchwardens would administer the parish. Since then the composition, function, rights and responsibilities have been refined in law and the current rules are set out in the “Church Representation Rules (CRR) 2006” [ISBN 0715110128]

A copy of the CRR may be obtained from Church House Publishing, Church House, Great Smith Street, London, SW 1 P 3NZ

It is a legal entity

existing in its own right, and it is therefore distinct from the individual members of the PCC. As a result, changes in the membership of the PCC should not result in any changes to contracts etc. entered into by previous members because it is the PCC which has entered into contracts. Another consequence is that individual PCC members should not become personally responsible for the liabilities of the PCC.

It is a Charity

by virtue of its objectives, which are the advancement of

religion and the making of provision for public worship. So the members of the PCC are the trustees of the charity. PCCs are not required to register with the Charity Commission unless their income is over £100,000. Those that do submit annual accounts audited by an independent auditor agreed and signed off by the incumbent and the PCC.

Rights and Duties of the PCC

The rights and responsibilities of the PCC are framed by legislation, the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 and the Synodical Government Measure 1969. These make clear that it is the duty of the

incumbent and the Parochial Church Council to consult together on matters of general concern and importance in the parish. The incumbent and the PCC each have their own particular rights and responsibilities in the life of the church but the important theme here is partnership and co-operation. More specifically, the PCC is responsible for the following functions:

* co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
* the consideration and discussion of matters concerning the Church of England or any other matters of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the Church on any question;
* making known and putting into effect any provisions made by the diocesan synod or the deanery synod, but without prejudice to the

powers of the council on any particular matter;

* giving advice to the diocesan synod and the deanery synod on any matter referred to the council;
* raising such matters as the council consider appropriate with the diocesan synod or deanery synod.

In addition, the PCC is formally the employer of any paid workers and is responsible for informing the Data Protection Commissioner, where necessary in respect of data held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Size of the PCC

The size of the PCC depends on the size of the electoral role. For less than 50 on the roll the PCC will be 6. For between 50 and 100 the PCC will be 9 and for over 100 there may be an additional 3 members for every 100 up to a maximum of 15 members. Ministers and Churchwardens are ex-officio members of the PCC.

The PCC may also co-opt additional persons up to one fifth of the elected members, or 2 whichever is the greater, being either clergy or laity. The term of office of a co-opted person shall be until the conclusion of the next annual meeting.

Term of Office

CRR 16 states that members of the PCC "...shall hold office from the conclusion of the annual meeting at which they were elected until the conclusion of the third annual meeting thereafter, one third retiring and being elected each year ... " That said a PCC member may resign his/her membership by notice in writing sent or given to the PCC Secretary and the resignation shall take effect on the date specified in the notice or, if no date is specified, on receipt of the note by the PCC Secretary.

Officers of the PCC

Every PCC shall have a:

-Chairman-who is the incumbent.

-Vice-Chairman- who is a lay member of the PCC.

-Secretary -The PCC may appoint one of its members to act as Secretary or appoint someone else to. If it appoints someone they are not automatically members of the PCC unless co-opted

-Treasurer -The PCC may appoint one or more of its members to act as Treasurer either solely or jointly. As with the Secretary someone else may be appointed or failing that the role defaults to the Churchwardens.

Electoral Roll Officer

In addition, PCC membership will include one or more members of the deanery synod, who have an important role in linking the parish into the wider structures of the church.

Committees of the PCC

Given its wide responsibilities (pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical), the PCC on its own may not be able to do everything that is needed in the parish. Many PCCs therefore have several committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of parish life.

Each committee has at least one PCC member on it. These committees are formally responsible to the PCC, reporting back to it regularly and seeking its approval before making major changes or incurring significant costs. The PCC should also provide strategic direction to the committees, so they are reasonably joined up and all pulling in the

same direction.

Financial responsibility

The PCC largely discharges its responsibility for the financial affairs of the parish by the appointment of a treasurer, and the Finance Committee, but this does not absolve it of ultimate responsibility for the finances and so the PCC should require the Treasurer or chair of the Finance Committee to make regular reports on the financial position at PCC meetings.

The Charities Act 1993 and CRRs charge the trustees (that is the PCC members) with the following specific duties in relation to finances:

* The keeping of proper accounting records. This means records that show from day to day amounts received and expended, including the matters to which they relate, and a record of assets and liabilities. The records should be sufficient to show the financial position of the PCC at any time.
* The preparation of annual financial statements and an annual report that complies with the CRRs and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
* Appointment of an independent examiner or auditor and making arrangements for the examination or audit to be carried out.
* Presenting the annual report, financial statements and independent examiner's or auditor's report to the APCM, and displaying those before and after the meeting.
* As the annual report and financial statements are the responsibility of the PCC, the CRRs require them to be approved by the PCC and signed by the Chairman and one other PCC member before presentation to the APCM.

Meetings of the PCC

PCCs may meet as often as they wish but must meet at least 4 times per year. Except in an emergency or other special circumstance requiring immediate action, when not less that 3 days’ notice is required, members should receive at least 7 days’ notice of any meeting. No business shall be transacted by the PCC unless at least one third of the members are present. No business, which is not on the agenda, shall be transacted by the PCC unless at least three-quarters of the members present so agree. Minutes of the meeting shall be made available to all members of the PCC and to any person with the specific approval of the PCC.

Your Role on the PCC

Your role on the PCC will depend on the needs of your particular parish and the specific skills, experience and attributes you bring to the PCC.

That said there are certain matters that should be common to all PCC members. You should make yourself aware of key facts about your church and the area which it serves. What percentage of your local population comes to church? Why do many not come? What are the needs of the local community? Can your church meet some of those needs? Do you need to change as a church to meet those needs? What are the needs of your congregation? What is the financial and material state of your church? In addition to local concerns you should keep yourself informed about Diocesan and National church matters so that you can let your Deanery representatives have your views and comments when such matters come up for discussion.

ADVICE

Membership of the PCC can be daunting especially if you have been a member of your local church for many years but have never really understood what the PCC does or what is expected of you and perhaps now do not wish to ask other members of the PCC about your new role.

David Watts

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