

BEING A PCC MEMBER at All Saints Patcham

For those thinking about becoming a PCC member or have become one – this is for you! However if still unclear, please ask. This isn't the definitive guide to all things PCC – and there are links to other resources at the end of this.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

WHAT IS THE PCC?

The Parochial Church Council is the governing body of a parish church. The 'church' is also a charity;

1) It is the executive body of a Church of England parish, and so exists to ensure a parish carries out its duties. Something called the PCC Measure lists in full what those are, but basically it means the PCC is responsible for sharing the leadership, management and administration of a parish with the incumbent.

2) It is a body of Trustees for a charity (a legal entity) and so there are certain responsibilities and legal requirements that we need to comply with to ensure we follow best practice in the governance of the charity. There is an income thresh-hold above which a charity must register with the Charity Commission. Patcham All Saints parish income is above that, and so we are a registered charity.

3) It is a 'Council' which means the members, are there to manage the affairs of the church members and it has a formal constitution that directs its activities (eg there are certain set items on the meeting agenda that have to be covered).

The PCC has legal status and the Church Representation Rules apply [see appendix a]

WHAT DOES THE PCC DO?

In brief the role of the PCC is;

Attending to God – worship and prayer

Building a Christian community – The Church growing in Holiness and Love

Commending God's love for the world – Mission and Outreach in the community

HOW THAT IS WORKED OUT;

The PCC is responsible for the overall wellbeing, practical as well as spiritual, of their church; the church members and the church buildings. The PCC also has a duty to promote the mission of the church within the wider community.

Some of the responsibilities are devolved to the Minister and Churchwardens but, 'It shall be the duty of the minister and the PCC to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish' (from the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956 section 2). Members of the PCC have the right to be consulted, to know what is proposed, and to have the opportunity to express an opinion on it.

The Minister is Chairman of the PCC though he/she may on occasion ask another member to chair a particular meeting. A treasurer, a secretary and vice-chairman will usually be elected to office at its first meeting after the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). The PCC will also appoint a standing committee, typically the Minister as chair, the churchwardens, the treasurer and two elected members.

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Prayer and Worship are at the heart of the work of the PCC. The PCC should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for public worship and provide an opportunity for people of all ages to meet for prayer and worship. In practice this might mean agreeing on the format and timings of services that will meet the needs of the church members, providing facilities for younger members and families, setting up Bible study or Prayer groups etc....

MISSION AND OUTREACH

The PCC has an important part to play in promoting the mission of their church, amongst the congregation and in the wider community, and members of the PCC should demonstrate their commitment to the Christian faith through leadership, by example and by witness, in the parish. The PCC is encouraged to develop, and maintain, a Mission Action Plan (MAP), to review the life of the church and identify mission opportunities.

Every member should be involved at each stage of the MAP process – the development of the plan, its implementation, and a regular review process.

PASTORAL CARE

The PCC and its members have a duty to support their clergy, prayerfully and personally. They have a duty to support the members of the congregation and to extend a welcome to all who visit the church, to members of the church community and to those visiting the church at other times. The church has a duty of pastoral care to all who live in our communities, whether members of the church or not, and PCC members are expected to take the lead in demonstrating that care.

FINANCE

The PCC will appoint a treasurer, and sometimes an assistant treasurer, to manage the day to day finances of the parish. The treasurer does not need to be a qualified accountant (though a very large parish might consider it appropriate to appoint a qualified accountant). He/She must understand how to maintain books, must have a good knowledge of the parish and the work of the church. The treasurer will keep members informed on the financial situation and present a clear report to each PCC meeting so that the PCC has confidence in our financial reporting.

PCC members are Trustees of a charity and are responsible for managing the Church's finances. They must ensure that all funds are properly accounted for, the books properly maintained, and the PCC annual accounts inspected or audited, and formally approved by the PCC, prior to the APCM. In law, the PCC is a *body corporate*. This means that it is a separate body from the people who serve on it so PCC members are not liable for any debts incurred by the PCC. However, the trustees do have certain responsibilities under the Charities Act and members should acquaint themselves with *Trusteeship, an introduction for PCC members* [appendix b] which provides more detailed guidance.

BUILDINGS

The PCC is responsible for the care and maintenance of the fabric of the church, and any other buildings owned by the church. In practice the PCC may appoint a Fabric subcommittee to assist them but the PCC members should be aware of any issues relating to the buildings and they have the responsibility of deciding on them and voting on items of expenditure.

THE PCC MEETING

The PCC is required by law to meet at least four times a year (one meeting may follow on from the APCM) though some PCCs may decide to meet more frequently. There is a strong argument for holding more frequent, but shorter, meetings and in any event good practice suggests a maximum two hours for each meeting as a general rule.

The PCC should take time at these meetings to consider and discuss, and if appropriate vote upon, matters concerning the Church of England arising at a higher synod or referred down to the PCC by the Bishop or by the deanery, diocesan or General Synod.

The PCC may also on occasion decide to send information, an opinion or a motion up to the deanery synod.

The PCC meeting should be a forum for open discussion with every member feeling able to ask a question or voice an opinion.

WHO CAN BE A MEMBER OF THE PCC?

If you are 16 years old or over, have been on the electoral roll of your parish for at least 6 months and are an actual communicant, **YOU** can stand for election to your PCC. There is a list of people who are barred from serving on a Charity and all names are checked against this list.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PCC

Members of the PCC are drawn from two sources, those elected at the Annual Parish Church Meeting, and those who are ex officio members (ie automatically members).

The following are ex officio members

- All Priests and Deacons licensed to the parish
- Deaconesses, Licensed Lay Workers and Readers licensed to the parish
- The churchwardens
- Any person on the electoral roll who is a member of deanery, diocesan or general synod

Additional members may be co-opted onto the council by the PCC during the course of the year.

The number of elected members on a PCC is governed by the Church Representation Rules and is based on the number of people on the electoral roll. [see appendix a] but the APCM can determine (to take effect in a year's time) how many elected members a PCC shall have.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A PCC MEMBER

Our 'paperwork' for meeting is sent out by email, so you need to be happy for this, although we don't expect you to print everything out.

To comply with anti-money laundering legislation, you will be required to give some personal details to our banks to run a check on each person, even if you are not involved hands-on with money.

You will be required to undergo safeguarding training to comply with C of E standards. This can be done online.

You will be required to familiarise yourself and comply with the various policies in respect of good governance and safeguarding that the PCC has adopted.

Decisions at Council are sometimes simply taken with a 'general agreement'. Others require a vote and can be decided by a simple majority. And some of the smaller items that crop up between meetings are voted on by email.

For some of the bigger items (eg a major piece of building work) we might say that we want a 2 to 1, or a 3 to 1 vote in favour before agreeing to go ahead. Either way, once a decision is made, it is the duty of the whole PCC to support it – excepting matters of conscience.

Confidential nature of some items and is the actual discussion confidential?

Some golden rules of PCC membership

Do

- Attend meetings (and on time), or give apologies if you cannot attend
- Read the papers before the meeting, be prepared
- Ask if in doubt (especially important for new members)
- Always attempt to resolve differences with your fellow members
- Listen carefully to one another and respect each others contributions, conducting our discussions with grace and love, particularly when we disagree with one another
- Remembering that we are elected to represent the views of church members, not just our own agenda.
- Enjoy being a member of the PCC!

Do not

- Volunteer for a task unless you are sure that you have the time to complete it

Someone may ask - **What skills do I need to be a member of the PCC?** Skills may be too prescriptive; it is better perhaps to say that someone interested in becoming a member of the PCC will be:

- A committed member of the congregation
- Interested in and involved with the life of the church and the local community
- Willing to learn and to share ideas, experience and gifts
- Caring
- Able to listen to another's point of view

The PCC needs thinkers and doers, questioners and listeners **but YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE**

- A SAINT
- A THEOLOGIAN
- AN EXPERT

THOUGH NOBODY WILL MIND IF YOU ARE!

Finally, some guidance from St Paul, writing to the Romans;

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

(Romans 12:3-8)

But remember YOU do have gifts with which to serve God and each other!

Thank you for Reading! God Bless

Andy

THE PLACE OF THE PCC IN THE WIDER CHURCH – follow the link to find out how the Church of England is structured; <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance>

APPENDICES

a) The Church Representation Rules can be found here;

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/church-representation-rules>

b) A booklet, **Trusteeship, an introduction for PCC members can be downloaded from the parish resources website at <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/news/trusteeship/>**

FURTHER READING – NB – we are not asking you to buy these!

'Practical Church Management' [James Behrens, published by Gracewing 2014]

'A Churchwarden's Handbook' [MacMorran and Briden, published by Continuum] – a copy is in the Office