

St. Laurence's Catholic Parish, Cambridge CB4 1XB – Diocese of East Anglia

Parish Pastoral Council Constitution

SECTION 1: AIMS AND COMPOSITION

*“As a community, the Church must practise love. Love thus needs to be organised if it is to be an ordered service of the community.” [Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 20]* The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), is a consultative body made up of members of the Parish who act in partnership with the Parish Priest, sharing in the leadership of the Parish. The PPC facilitates the active participation and collaboration of all Parishioners in supporting and developing the life, worship and witness of the Parish Community, building up the Body of Christ and fostering pastoral and missionary action, as well as working with, supporting and advising the Parish Priest in his responsibilities.

Aims

Within the context of increasing the involvement of the laity in pastoral affairs, through meetings and forum, the aims of the PPC are:

1. to work with the Parish Priest in all matters relating to the administration, general welfare and development of the Parish;
2. to coordinate the work of related teams, committees, sub-committees or other action groups;
3. to facilitate, through its representative role, the concerns and rights of the members of the Parish, as expressed in the law of the Church, namely: *“To make known their needs, especially their spiritual needs, and their wishes to the Pastors of the Church” [Can. 212.2]* and *“... to make their views known to others of Christ's faithful...” [Can. 212.3]*
4. to ensure an approach to Parish life consistent with the Synodal Pathway, and to follow through ideas and actions identified through Synodal processes within the Parish,

Composition

The PPC shall comprise the following members:

Parish Priest (President);

Other members of the clergy working within the Parish;

The following officers of the PPC – Chairperson; Vice-Chairperson; Secretary;

Treasurer (or other nominated representative of the Finance Committee);

Appointed members – to include at least one representative from each Core Team;

1. PPC decisions will normally proceed by consensus, recorded within meetings or via email where prudent, but a vote may be called where this is helpful and all members shall be entitled to vote.
2. In addition to the permanent appointed members a member may be co-opted, by consensus, for as long as is necessary, in order to advise, report or speak upon a specific subject, and may vote in respect of that subject.
3. Any person from outside the PPC membership may be invited, with the consent of the Chairperson and Parish Priest, to attend meetings of the PPC and may be asked to speak, but shall not be entitled to vote.
4. There shall be five Core Teams, each represented on the PPC: Liturgy, Education and Faith Sharing; Office & Staff; Communications & Outreach; Buildings & Grounds; Social Activities. The PPC may set up, as required, other committees, sub-committees or action groups to carry out specified tasks, short or long term, and to report regularly on findings, progress or conclusions.

SECTION 2: RULES

The PPC should normally consist of no less than eight members, including the Parish Priest. There is no fixed maximum, but generally around 12-15 members may be prudent.

1. There are three ways by which a person can become a member of the PPC:
 - a. appointed – as outlined in Rule 3 below;
 - b. holders of the positions defined under “Composition” above;
 - c. co-opted membership for a given purpose and period.
2. The term of office for members of the PPC is two years, with less than half changing in the same year, to ensure continuity. Members may serve more than one term if nominated. Chairperson, Secretary, and Vice-Chairperson should not serve more than two terms of office consecutively.
3. Appointed members shall be identified through a process of volunteering and nomination. Final membership will be agreed by consensus of the PPC, initiated by the Parish Priest in consultation with the Chairperson, Secretary, and Vice-Chairperson, seeking to balance representation of Core Teams, Mass communities, and other key Parish groups and activities, while ensuring that the many aspects of diversity within the Parish are recognised. Where officer roles of the PPC are not filled, the Parish Priest should consult widely within the Parish.
4. If a member is unable to serve for the full two-year term their place can be filled with a co-opted member who would serve for the remainder of the term of office.
5. The Parish Priest and Chairperson in consultation with the PPC may also invite organisations and groups within the Parish to nominate representatives.
6. The Chairperson shall be elected by the PPC members, determined by receiving over 50% of the vote. This can be achieved by means of a series of votes, withdrawing the candidate(s) with the fewest votes at each stage. Once the Chairperson has been selected, a similar process shall be used to elect a Vice-Chairperson. Any member of the PPC shall be eligible for election to become Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, with the exception of the Parish Priest or other clergy.
7. The Chairperson is elected to serve for two years. If their membership of the PPC is due to expire before that time it does not affect their term of office as Chairperson, as the latter takes precedence. The Vice-Chairperson's term of office follows the same rule.
8. The Chairperson may serve for a further consecutive term of two years as Chairperson, subject to being re-elected.
9. The Secretary may be chosen from the members of the PPC or be co-opted from the Parish community. If co-opted, they will become a member of the PPC. The term of office is two years beginning from the time of appointment as Secretary, irrespective of their term of membership.
10. When it is necessary for a vote to be held during meetings on a matter of business other than elections this will normally be by show of hands, duly recorded. If a majority agree it is necessary, a secret ballot may be held and decided on a simple majority, duly recorded. All members have a right to vote. The Chairperson has the casting vote in the event of a tie. The minimum number needed for a quorate vote will be six or at least half of the current membership, whichever is the greater.
11. The agenda shall normally include: Finance update; Review of the areas covered by each Core Team; other items as necessary. PPC members may request items be added to the agenda by contacting the Secretary at least one week before the meeting.

12. All proceedings of the PPC will normally be open for parishioners to attend and the minutes will be published on the Parish website. However, closed sessions may be held if there is a need to discuss confidential matters. These will be minuted separately and minutes will be distributed only to PPC members. PPC members must respect the confidentiality of these sessions.
13. The PPC shall meet at intervals agreed by the members, with a minimum of once every three months (four times per year). One meeting per year must be combined with an Open Meeting of the Parish. Other open meetings may be formally requested or called by the PPC and Parish Priest or by the request of at least 10 members of the Parish according to pastoral requirements.
14. The PPC remains accountable to the wider Parish community. The PPC should seek to implement ideas or pastoral initiatives agreed at Open Meetings. If a formally called Open Meeting of the Parish expresses and records a vote of no confidence in the PPC, its members shall be deemed to have resigned and a new PPC should be constituted within 2 months.
15. Members who miss three consecutive meetings shall be deemed to have resigned, unless an exception is made by vote of the PPC.

SECTION 3: RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHAIRPERSON AND SECRETARY

These responsibilities shall be read and interpreted within the context of the previous sections.

Chairperson

The Chairperson (or the Vice-Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson) shall:

- chair the meetings;
- assist the Secretary in requesting input and preparing the agenda for meetings;
- ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly manner;
- ensure that the agenda is adhered to and that all members who wish to contribute to the debate are given equal opportunity to do so;
- invite one of the members to lead an opening and closing prayer for each meeting;
- invite another member to prepare an opening and closing prayer for the following meeting.
- act as a lay representative of the Parish when an occasion requires such representation, including the Diocesan Council of Laity – although such roles may be delegated by agreement;

Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- with the cooperation of the Parish Priest and the Chairperson, prompt members for input and prepare the agenda for meetings;
- ensure that all members of the PPC are in possession of the agenda for a meeting at least by the Sunday prior to the meeting;
- minute meetings and ensure the minutes of open sessions are published to the Parish;
- give formal notice of a Parish Open or Annual General Meeting at least two weeks before the date of that meeting via the Parish Newsletter and website;
- be responsible for ensuring that whenever a vote is called for, for whatever purpose, it is carried out within the requirements of the rules;
- maintain a record of the dates of PPC appointments and elections in order to ensure that new appointments are made, or elections are held, in accordance with the rules.

Related References (selected)

- Diocese of East Anglia – policies materials
 - Parish Structures for Lay Participation - <https://rcdea.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Parish-Structures-for-Lay-Participation055c.pdf>
 - Background materials underpinning the Policy on Parish Structures - <https://rcdea.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Background-materials-underpinning-the-Policy-on-Parish-Structures61f9.pdf>
- Parish Handbook and Appendices (April 2021) - <https://www.rcdea.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Parish-Handbook-and-Appendices-April-2021.pdf>
- Code | Parish Pastoral Councils - <https://www.pastoralcouncils.com/bibliography/vatican-documents/code>

Proposed PPC and Related New Teams

- **PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC).** This group will bring the work of all of the other teams listed below together and be a place to discuss issues, propose new ideas, advise the Parish Priest, and ensure that things get done.
- **LITURGY, EDUCATION, AND FAITH SHARING TEAM.** This team will help to ensure that Masses and other services are well-planned and supported (e.g., with Sacristy assistance, rotas, planning for feast days, etc.). It will coordinate between existing liturgy, educational, catechesis, and faith sharing activities in the Parish, and propose and support new ones.
- **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.** This team will ensure that social activities are organised, both working with existing activities (such as the Saturday coffee hub & 11am Mass Coffee) and supporting and generating new ideas. We welcome anyone who enjoys bringing people together.
- **COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH.** This team will consider the face that St Laurence's presents to the world and how to better communicate with both parishioners and people living within our Parish who are not yet parishioners. It will also promote links with other parishes, Christian churches, and faith communities. We welcome volunteers with communications, marketing, social media, website, publishing, or similar experience.
- **BUILDINGS, GROUNDS, AND FACILITIES.** This team will ensure that our buildings and gardens are brought into good order and maintained. We welcome volunteers with skills or experience in facilities management, building, DIY, gardening, or similar.
- **PARISH OFFICE AND STAFF SUPPORT.** This team will help the Parish Priest in managing administration of the Parish and Parish staff (e.g., in objective-setting, appraisals, coaching and mentoring for staff). We welcome volunteers for this team who have human resources, management, or similar experience.