

# Catholic Parish of St Aidan's Coulsdon

## PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

### CONSTITUTION

#### SECTION 1: AIMS AND COMPOSITION

The Parish Pastoral Council, hereafter referred to as the PPC, comprises a group of members who act in partnership with the parish priest in his leadership of the parish. The PPC is a consultative body.

*"In this council, which is presided over by the parish priest, ... those who ... are engaged in pastoral care in the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action."*[Code of Canon Law, Can. 536.1]

#### **Aims**

Within the context of increasing the involvement of the laity in pastoral affairs 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 committees, sub-committees or other action groups, as may from time to time be constituted;
3. to facilitate, through the representative role of the members, the rights of the members of the parish as expressly stated in the law of the Church – the Code of Canon Law – 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]

#### **Composition**

The PPC shall comprise the following members:

Parish Priest (ex-officio);

Chairperson;

Vice-Chairperson;

Secretary;

Parish Treasurer (ex-officio);

Appointed or Elected Members.

Ex-officio members acquire their places on the PPC by virtue of the office or position they hold in the parish.

1. All members shall be entitled to vote.
2. In addition to the appointed or elected members, a member may be co-opted, at the discretion of the parish priest and Chairperson, 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. The PPC may set up, as required, committees, sub-committees or other action groups to carry out specified tasks, short term or long term, and to report regularly on findings, progress or conclusions as appropriate. Subjects which might lend themselves to being managed in this way include spiritual formation, liturgy, evangelisation, apostolic works, missions, retreat days, social action, ecumenical activity and parish development.

## **SECTION 2: RULES**

The PPC should normally consist of 12 people including the parish priest.

There are four ways by which a person can become a member of the PPC:

- a. nominations and elections as in Rule 4 below;
  - b. invitation to individuals for a particular reason as outlined in Rule 7 below;
  - c. ex-officio membership;
  - d. co-opted membership for a given purpose and period.
1. The term of office for members of the PPC is four years. Members may serve more than one term if nominated /elected. Members should not serve more than two terms of office consecutively, except in the case of ex-officio members or in special circumstances.
  2. When vacancies occur the PPC will ensure that they are filled. The parish will be informed of vacancies through the newsletter and the website. A list will be displayed in the church on which names of proposed members can be written along with the names of those who are nominating them.
  3. A parishioner wishing to serve on the PPC must be nominated by four members of the parish. The person thus nominated is appointed or made eligible for election, (see Rule 5 below). They must be at least 19 years of age.
  4. All members of the parish aged 16 years and over will have the right to propose new members and be eligible to vote. A parishioner cannot nominate more than one person at any given time. For the purposes of membership of the PPC “a parishioner” is someone who is a baptised Catholic and whose Mass attendance is regularly at St. Aidan’s. The same definition applies to ‘parish members’ who are nominators and to those eligible to vote.

5. Where there are more people nominated than there are vacancies on the PPC a system of election will be devised. Elections should not be held more than once a year
6. If a member is unable to serve for the full four-year term their place can be filled with a co-opted member who would serve for the remainder of the term of office or the PPC may arrange to fill the vacancy with a nominated / elected member.
7. The parish priest and Chairperson in consultation with the PPC may also invite organisations and groups within the parish to nominate representatives.
8. The Chairperson shall be elected by the PPC members. The winning candidate should receive over 50% of the vote. This can be achieved by means of a series of votes, eliminating the person with the fewest votes at each stage. The person who comes second shall be invited to be Vice-Chairperson. Any member of the PPC, with the exception of the parish priest, shall be eligible for election. Ex-officio members are not eligible and therefore not permitted to become Chairperson or Vice Chairperson.
9. 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.
10. The Chairperson may serve for a further consecutive term of two years as Chairperson subject to being re-elected. Following such a second term a period of at least one year must elapse before a past Chairperson again becomes eligible for re-appointment or re-election as Chairperson.
11. 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 for four years beginning from the time of appointment as Secretary, irrespective of their term of membership. The PPC may also appoint a secretary without them becoming a member.
12. 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. If thought necessary a secret ballot may be held and decided on a simple majority. Ex-officio members have a right to vote. The Chairperson has the casting vote. The minimum number needed for a quorate vote will be at least half of the current membership.
13. The PPC shall meet at intervals agreed by the members. One meeting per year may be combined with an annual Parish General Meeting. Other open meetings may be called by the parish priest should the PPC recommend doing so.
14. Members who miss three consecutive meetings without apology or explanation will lose the right to remain on 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 shall:

- chair the meetings;
- assist the Secretary in 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;
- outside of the meetings, act as a lay representative of the parish when an occasion requires such representation;.
- invite one of the members to lead an opening prayer for each meeting;
- invite another member to prepare an opening prayer for the following meeting.

The Vice-Chairperson will chair the meeting in the absence of the Chairperson.

#### **Secretary**

The Secretary shall:

- with the cooperation of the parish priest and the Chairperson, 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 the proceedings of meetings;
- give formal notice of a Parish General Meeting at least two weeks before the date of that meeting;
- 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.