

**Constitution of
The Parish Pastoral Council
of St George and the English Martyrs
Shoeburyness**

1. OBJECT

The Council is a body based on shared ministry that assists the Parish Priest in co-ordinating the overall policy of the parish in order to carry out the mission of Christ in the Church. It is a consultative body of leaders within the limits of the doctrine, liturgy and laws of the Church.

2. CHARACTERISTICS

The essential characteristics of the Council will be as follows: -

- (a) A parish council is faithful. Its members are to be true to the ideals of Christ not only for the benefit of their own spirituality but also for the growth and enhancement of Christ's teaching within the community.
- (b) A parish council is pastoral. It strives to identify those matters and issues, which bear on pastoral activities affecting the lives of parishioners. It formulates, on behalf of the parish, practical conclusions regarding such matters. The Council, in consultation with the parish priest will decide what specific actions or programmes the parish should adopt in meeting its mission of assisting parishioners through their spiritual and moral development.
- (c) A parish council must be representative. A council is a representative body rather than a body of representatives. A council member is not the representative for a particular section of the parish, but ministers to the entire parish community. Thus the Council represents all areas of parish life.
- (d) A parish council is sensitive. All members must participate in formulating policy for the parish. This will require them to be aware of the needs and aspirations of the parishioners and of the entire community.
- (e) A parish council is outreaching. It must strive to meet some of the larger issues within the Church and the world. It must seek to be a credible example of concern for justice, peace and reconciliation, bearing witness to Christ's teaching.
- (f) A parish council is perceptive. It must take account of the unique talents of every parishioner. These talents are to be shared and organised for the development of the parish and the wider community. It seeks to enable parishioners to discover and develop their talents.
- (g) A parish council is collaborative. As part of the diocese and deanery, the parish seeks to collaborate with other parishes to carry out the mission of the Church. The members of the parish council are responsible for leading the parish in sharing experiences with other parishes and the community at large.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- (a) The Council shall consist in the first instance of the clergy of the parish, four appointed, six elected members and four permanent co-opted members – consisting of; the Head Teacher of St George's School, the Chair of the Finance Committee, the Parish Treasurer and the Parish Steward of the Gospel representative.
- (b) Every lay member shall be a Catholic over the age of sixteen years and shall be ordinarily residing within the parish or regularly attending services in the Churches.
- (c) Elected and appointed members of the Council shall serve for a period of three

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years.

- (d) Every elected and appointed member shall be eligible to be re-elected or reappointed for a consecutive full term of office but, subject to clause 3 (f), shall not be eligible to be a member during the following term.
- (e) Upon a member other than a co-opted member dying, or resigning in writing to the Parish Priest, a successor shall in the case of an appointed member be appointed by the Parish Priest, and in the case of an elected member be appointed by the Council.
- (f) The Council may at any time co-opt an additional member or members but so that the number of such co-opted members shall not at any time exceed two.

4. OFFICERS

- (a) The Parish Priest shall be President of the Council. He or his representative shall attend all Council meetings.
- (b) After an election of members of the Council, the lay members shall appoint a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson annually from among themselves.
- (c) Any member without due cause who fails to attend three consecutive meetings will be deemed to have resigned.
- (d) The Council shall have a secretary who shall be a lay member or suitable person appointed by the Parish Priest.

5. MEETINGS

- (a) The Council shall meet at least four times a year.
- (b) It will be the duty of the Chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council to convene a meeting of the Council within 28 days after an election of members of the Council and thereafter, subject to clause 5 (i), the dates and times of meetings shall be fixed by the Council. Subject to clause 5 (c), at least 21 days' notice of a meeting of the Council shall be given by written announcements posted in the parish newsletter.
- (c) The President and/or the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and any two members may convene an emergency meeting by giving the other members at least 7 days' notice of such meeting.
- (d) The quorum for a meeting of the Council shall be eight members.
- (e) The Chairperson, or in their absence the Vice-Chairperson, shall preside at meetings of the Council; but if neither shall be present at a meeting, the members present shall appoint one of their number to preside at such a meeting.
- (f) Any person entitled under clause 7 (c) to attend the Annual General Meeting may attend any meeting of the Council but shall not be entitled to vote and may speak only if invited to do so by the person presiding at the meeting.
- (g) Business transacted at a meeting of the Council shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes of members present and in the case of an equality of votes, the person presiding at such meeting shall only have a casting vote. At the Chairperson's discretion, voting may be by secret ballot.
- (h) The Secretary shall keep minutes of the business transacted by the Council, which shall include a record of all appointments, resolutions and other formal acts of the Council. The signature of the person presiding at the next meeting shall authenticate the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council. The

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minutes shall be displayed in the porches at St. George's and St. Gregory's.

- (i) Subject to the provisions of this constitution, the Council shall regulate its own proceedings.

6. COMMITTEES

Whenever the Council shall think fit, it may appoint from its members or other suitable persons, a special committee to undertake particular business and may delegate to such a committee any of the functions of the Council but so that all acts of such a committee shall be reported to the Council and considered by it.

7. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- (a) Nominations for election will be opened one month before the AGM, where elections will take place. In every year, at about 1st December, an Annual General Meeting shall be held:-
To receive and consider a report from the Parish Pastoral Council together with any proposal for the amendment of this Constitution;
To receive and consider the parish accounts,
To deal with such parish matters as submitted to the Secretary of the Parish Pastoral Council at least 7 days prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- (b) It shall be the duty of the Council to convene the Annual General Meeting and to give at least 28 days' notice thereof by written announcement posted in the newsletter, and by other such means as may be practicable.
- (c) All Catholic persons over the age of sixteen ordinarily residing within the parish or regularly attending services in the Parish shall be entitled to attend the Annual General Meeting and to take part in its business.
- (d) The Parish Priest, or in his absence such person as he shall name for the purpose, shall preside at the Annual General Meeting.

8. REPORT

The Council shall prepare and submit to each Annual General Meeting a report, in writing of its activities since the previous such Meeting and a copy of such report shall be posted in the porch at St George's and St Gregory's at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting.

9. AMENDMENT

This constitution may be amended by a proposal at the AGM put forward by anyone referred to in 7 (c), and must be supported by not less than 20 signatories (eligible as under 7(c)). The proposal and any amendments will be voted upon at the AGM, and a two-thirds majority will be required. Any proposal needs to be tabled at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting to the Chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council for amendments to be adopted.

10. FUNCTIONS

The following are the functions of the Council.

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- (a) To nurture the faith of the parish.
- (b) To provide leadership and direction for the parish enabling all parishioners to share responsibility for parish life.
- (c) To engage families and individuals in parish planning and overall policies for the parish pastoral mission and ministry.
- (d) To serve as a permanent, but flexible structure, for dialogue between clergy and laity.
- (e) To ensure through its committee structure a continuous and integrated survey of the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish, wider community and diocese.
Further, to set priorities and programmes to meet these needs.
- (f) To co-ordinate parish activities with the Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Councils.
- (g) To identify, support, and encourage the gifts and talents of all parishioners.
- (h) To be stewards of the community.
- (i) To prepare and develop the parish in accordance with the mission of the Church.

Revised: November 2016