

## Advice regarding 'Remote' APCMs and Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Detailed papers (including forms and nomination papers) relating to the general business of annual meetings can be found here:

<https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/parish-resources/pccs/apcm-parish-resources/>

The information in this paper relates specifically to the holding of 'remote' meetings by video conferencing/telephone/live streaming/other electronic facilities. Bishop Philip has issued a direction to give legal permission for such meetings to be held.

### Both Meetings:

#### 1. Notices

The posting of separate notices for both meetings needs to include 2 Sundays beforehand. A hard copy of notices posted outside the church is the legal requirement - but it would be sensible to use in addition as many means of electronic communication as possible, including any remote acts of worship taking place. The notices will need to be amended to give details of the remote nature of the meeting, and provide details of how it can be accessed.

#### 2. Recording the meeting.

It is possible to record the entire meeting when video conferencing. This is advisable, even if you do not think anything would be contentious. It is essential that all participants know that this is happening (at both meetings). If there is any query over the minutes of the meeting, or over decisions made, recourse to the recording will be possible.

#### 3. Ensuring eligibility to vote

This is going to be complicated if more than the 'usual suspects' will be present. A suggested way forward:

- When giving notice of the meetings, encourage those people who are intending to attend to email the secretary in advance with their details: proper name, name of video presence, residence within parish?, on ER? Ensure it is clear that even if people have not done this, they will still be able to attend, but will need to provide the information on arrival at the meeting.
- Ask people to enter the meeting 10 mins before it is due to start
- Use the person acting as secretary to the meeting to make a register of all present: proper name, name of video presence, residence within parish?, on ER?
- The person chairing the meeting should aim to manage the process of ensuring the register is complete before the meeting begins
- The host (who has control over people joining) should make a note of people who join the meeting while it is in progress, and ensure that they are identified and registered before any vote takes place (rather than at the point at which they join, so the flow of the meeting is not disrupted)

### 3. Voting

This is also going to be complicated if anything is contentious and if numbers are large. Whilst the Church Representation Rules allow for anyone present to request a written (secret) ballot, this is not going to be possible in a remote meeting. This may need to be explained. Suggestions for counting votes are:

- Use the polling feature available through Zoom (see 'Polling using zoom' from London Diocese)
- OR Use the secretary to read out names of those on the register, at which point that person can voice their vote ('yes/no/abstain' or 'Jones/Smith/Brown'). The chair of the meeting should record votes and give totals at the end of the voting procedure. Ensure everyone entitled to vote has done so before announcing outcome.
- OR if there are few enough present to enable a hand-count, this can be used ('those in favour/those against/any abstentions' or 'Smith/Brown/Jones'). Request 'real' hands be shown to the camera (rather than a virtual hand which has a tendency to disappear) and that they continue to be shown until informed by the chair. Use at least 2 counters, and do not move on until there is agreement about numbers - do not forget there may be multiple screens-worth of attendees.
- OR Ask those voting to write their vote clearly and present it to the camera until told they can take it down. Again use at least 2 counters.
- Postal votes can only be included if a previous APCM agreed to same.

### Meeting of the Parishioners (aka Vestry Meeting):

1. Any member of the civil electoral roll of the civil parish(es) or anyone on the electoral roll of the parish church(es) can attend and vote.
2. Nominations to the office of churchwarden need to be in writing, and signed by the candidate before the meeting. Nomination papers are found through the link above. Nominations can be received by email attachment or by hard copy before the meeting, and can only be made and seconded by those entitled to attend the meeting.
3. Give clarity about when this meeting finishes, and those lay people not on the church electoral roll need to be asked to leave.

### APCM:

1. Distribute all reports electronically or in hard copy in advance.
2. Only those on the Church Electoral roll are entitled to attend and vote at this meeting.
3. Nominations for Deanery Synod representative or PCC Members can be made in writing prior to the meeting, or orally at the meeting - so make sure there is space to allow any oral nominations. Those who nominate or second candidates must be eligible to vote at this meeting.

