

# Frequently Asked Questions about Annual Parochial Church Meetings 2026

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We have focussed on those areas that we believe will be most helpful to you as you prepare for and hold your Annual Parochial Church Meetings, but would encourage you to obtain a copy of CRR 2025. Copies can be purchased from Church House Bookshop [here](#) and it is also available on-line [here](#)

If you have any questions then please do get in touch.

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## Meetings

### 1. Why are 2 meetings needed?

*Every parish is legally required to hold an Annual Parish Meeting to elect Churchwardens and an Annual Parochial Church Meeting to conduct other parish business. These are required under statute through the Church Representation Rules.*

### 2. When should these meetings be held?

*Between the 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> May of each year.*

### 3. What if there are genuine reasons that it is not possible to hold these meetings within that time frame?

*Please urgently contact your appropriate Archdeacon for advice.*

#### **4. Who is eligible to attend these meetings?**

*For the Annual Parish Meeting any member of the civil electoral roll of the civil parish(es) or someone on the electoral roll of the parish church(es) can attend and vote. For the Annual Parochial Church Meeting it is anyone on the electoral roll of the parish church(es) only.*

#### **5. Who is the chair of the APCM?**

*The minister of the parish chairs the APCM, or if he/she is not present, the vice-chair of the PCC.*

*See CRR M4 for further details.*

### **Elections - Churchwardens**

#### **6. How many should be elected and for how long?**

*Two churchwardens should be elected for 1 year only for each parish.*

*Where a parish has more than one parish church and/or parish centre of worship [designated under section 43 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, section 1(2)], the Churchwardens Measure 2001 provides for **two churchwardens to be appointed for each parish church/parish centre of worship.***

*Each candidate for election as a churchwarden must be nominated and seconded in writing by individuals entitled to attend the meeting (i.e. the nominee and seconder must be two different individuals).*

#### **7. Can anyone serve as a churchwarden?**

*There are certain eligibility requirements to be met in order to be able to serve as a churchwarden; these are details on the reverse of the Churchwarden Nomination form.*

*If you have any questions or concerns in relation to the eligibility requirements, please contact the Diocesan Registrar.*

#### **8. What if there is only one candidate?**

*The one candidate will be elected unopposed. You should let your relevant Archdeacon know, [archdeacons@trurodiocese.org.uk](mailto:archdeacons@trurodiocese.org.uk), that you have been unsuccessful in filling both posts.*

#### **9. How should an election be conducted?**

*It is very important that elections are conducted properly. If there are more than 2 candidates standing there will need to be an election. The Church Representation Rules state that votes in elections can be given:*

*a) by show of hands*

*if one or more persons object, on voting papers signed by the voter on the reverse thereof.*

*Therefore if an election is likely it is best to prepare before the meeting for the possibility of a ballot using election papers, since only 1 person needs to request it! Please note that you must ask the voter to sign the ballot paper. Unsigned papers will therefore be INVALID. It is a good idea to ask people to print their names for ease of identification. Any persons who do not qualify for attendance at the meeting cannot vote.*

*There are rights of appeal to the Deanery and to the Diocese if any person believes that an election has been conducted improperly or unfairly.*

#### 10. Is there a restriction on how long a churchwarden can continue to be eligible for election?

*The Churchwardens' Measure 2001 created a 6-year restriction on length of service. The six year period began to run when the Measure came into force in 2002, so the effects began to be relevant in 2008, with any continuous service prior to 2002 being ignored. Therefore, currently a churchwarden may not be elected as a churchwarden for the same parish for a continuous period of more than 6 years. Where an individual has served as a churchwarden for 6 continuous years they must take **at least a two year break before re-appointment.***

*The Annual Parish Meeting can vote to opt out of this restriction, but it must be done in advance of any such candidate standing for election. Any opt out by the Annual Parish Meeting holds until a subsequent similar meeting decides to opt back in.*

#### 11. Is there such a thing as a Vicar's Warden these days?

*Yes, but only in exceptional circumstances. The incumbent of the parish has the ability to inform the Annual Parish Meeting that he/she intends to appoint one of the churchwardens because it **appears to him or her that the appointment of a particular person nominated might give rise to serious difficulties between the minister and that person in carrying out their respective functions.** The incumbent should make a statement to the Annual Meeting and need not name the person involved; he/she will then choose one of the churchwardens from among those that have been nominated. If this is done then the other position is open to nominations and election in the usual way.*

#### 12. What about Deputy or Assistant Church Wardens?

*Deputy Churchwardens of district churches or places of worship other than parish churches are legally recognised under the Church Representation Rules and if appointed have ex-officio status on PCCs. However, they are not the Bishop's officer and they do not have the same legal status as churchwardens - they purely exercise functions designated to them. They are elected in the same way as churchwardens. Assistant Churchwardens and those designated Deputy Churchwardens in places not covered above do not have legal status and therefore need not be subject to election.*

### PCC Elections

#### 13. How many lay positions can we elect?

*The number of positions for members of the laity elected to a PCC depends upon the size of the Electoral Roll according to the Church Representation Rules. These are the numbers:*

<u>Size of Electoral Roll</u>	<u>Numbers of Elected Laity</u>
1-50	6
51-100	9
101-200	12
Above 200	15

*The numbers 6, 9, 12 and 15 can be varied by a resolution approved at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in the year preceding. Hence for example such a resolution passed at the APCM in 2026 will not take effect until 2027.*

*Each election will be for a rolling 3- year period which means one third of the laity are elected each year. However, please note that an Annual Parochial Church Meeting may decide that elected laity should retire at the end of the Annual Parochial Meeting following their election (i.e. to serve for a one-year term).*

**14. What is the order for existing PCC members to step down?**

*Usually this is determined by the order in which they were elected, so that no-one serves more than 3 years at a time. However, people will also become PCC members because they fill casual vacancies in the elected membership (see Q 15). Such people are either elected by the PCC to fill the casual vacancy or by a subsequent Annual Meeting. Any person so filling a casual vacancy takes up the unexpired term of the person who created the vacancy.*

**15. What is a casual vacancy?**

*A casual vacancy can arise when a PCC member has resigned or been removed from office before the end of their term or where a vacancy was not filled because insufficient candidates stood at the time of election.*

**16. How should casual vacancies be filled?**

*Casual vacancies that occur more than 2 months prior to the next Annual Meeting can be filled by an election of the PCC itself. Otherwise, the vacancy will be filled by election at the next Annual Meeting.*

**Variation of Term of Office**

*The annual meeting may decide that lay elected members are to retire at the conclusion of the annual meeting following their election.*

*If such a decision is made, it does not affect the term of office of a member due to retire from the PCC at the conclusion of the annual meeting held after the one at which the decision was taken.*

*Such a decision must also be reviewed by the annual meeting at least once every six years. If the annual meeting revokes the decision, lay elected members will hold office for the period beginning with the conclusion of the annual meeting as which they are elected and ends with the conclusion of the third subsequent annual meeting.*

*Rule M16(2) - (4)*

**17. If at our Annual Meeting we are filling casual vacancies with unexpired terms of less than 3 years in addition to the election of members to the normal 3 year term how do we determine who has taken which term of office?**

*The Church Representation Rules are fairly silent about process in such instances. They do say that casual vacancy elections taking place at Annual Meetings should be conducted in the same manner as ordinary elections. Strictly speaking there are 2 sets of elections to take place - the elections for the 3 year terms and the elections for the casual vacancies. In such a way, problems about allocation can be avoided. Practically however it would be expedient to hold both elections at the same time. In such circumstances and again, strictly speaking, terms should be allocated as follows:*

- The 3 year terms of office are assigned first to those achieving the highest level of votes, the 2 year terms then assigned to those with the next highest level of votes and then the 1 year terms to those with the next highest level of votes.*

*However if the candidates so agree and the Annual Meeting has no objections other methods may be used thus:*

- The terms are assigned upon the drawing of lots,*
- The terms are assigned by mutual agreement amongst the successful candidates.*

**18. Can anyone stand for election as a PCC member?**

*No, there are certain criteria that have to be met. The requirements are that the person must*

- i) Be aged 16 years or more*
- ii) Be entered on the church electoral roll and, unless under 18 years, have been on that roll for at least 6 months*
- iii) Be an “actual communicant” which means that he/she has received Communion according to the use of the Church of England or a Church in communion with the Church of England at least 3 times during the 12 months preceding the date of election.*
- iv) Not be disqualified from acting as a charity trustee under sections 178 and 178A, or section 181A, of the Charities Act 2011 and not having a Charity Commission waiver.*
- v) Not be disqualified from holding office under s 10(6) of the Incumbent(Vacation of Benefice) Measure 1997*

*The second of the criteria above means that a clerk in Holy Orders cannot stand for election as a PCC member. There is no way in which the third of the above criteria can effectively be enforced unless the individual feels unable to sign the nomination form or admits that they have not complied.*

*Individuals will be required to make a declaration that they are not disqualified from acting.*

**19. Isn't there a restriction on PCC employees themselves being a member of that PCC?**

*Not any longer. A PCC member (or person connected to a PCC member e.g. their spouse) may provide services to the PCC under a contract of employment, provided that the conditions set out in section 185 of the Charities Act 2011 are met.*

*Any conflicts of interest arising as a result of an individual being a PCC member (or person connected to a PCC member) and also an employee of the PCC must be managed appropriately*

**20. Is there a restriction for how long a person can continuously be eligible for election as a PCC member?**

*At the end of each term of office a PCC member will automatically retire and have to stand for re-election (i.e. the appointment will not automatically continue). However, there is no limit on the number of consecutive terms an individual can serve as a PCC member (unless the Annual Parochial Church Meeting resolves under Rule M16(7) that there should be a limit on the number of consecutive terms in office).*

**21. How should elections for PCC members be conducted?**

*These are the same as for churchwardens (see Q7) but please note that the Church Representation Rules allow the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to resolve that the election of parochial representatives of the laity is to be conducted by the single transferable vote system.*

**22. Are postal votes allowed?**

*Only if the Annual Meeting has previously voted to allow these. The conduct of elections, which include postal votes, is included in the Church Representation Rules Rule M11.*

**23. What if there is a tie in the voting?**

*If recounts still show a tie then the successful candidate is determined by the drawing of lots.*

**24. Can people be co-opted to the PCC? If so how many can be co-opted?**

*Yes, co-options are permitted by a vote of the PCC and their term is until the next annual meeting. If you elect 6, 9 or 12 parish representatives then 2 co-options are permitted; if 15 parish representatives then 3 co-options are permitted.*

**25. Are Readers ex-officio members of PCC?**

*The Church Representation Rules, M15(1), say that, if the annual meeting decides, readers licensed to the parish or to an area including the parish whose names are on the roll of the parish should be members, Accordingly their representation can effectively be changed by a resolution at the annual meeting.*

## **Deanery Synod Representatives**

**26. How many representatives do we have?**

*Again, this is dependent upon your Electoral Roll. The numbers are as follows:*

<u>Size of Electoral Roll</u>	<u>Numbers of Elected Laity</u>
1-25	1
26-50	2
51-100	3
101-200	4
201-300	5
Above 300	6

*It should be noted that Deanery Synod Representatives are elected directly to the relevant synod. As a result of their position on Deanery Synod they become ex-officio members of the relevant PCC.*

**27. When do elections take place and how should they be conducted?**

*These elections take place at an Annual Parochial Church Meeting every 3 years. These last took place in 2023 and so elections are due in 2026 for the period 2026 - 2029.*

**28. Is there a restriction for how long a person can continuously be eligible for election as a Deanery Synod member?**

*Yes, if the annual meeting has decided by resolution that a person who serves as a parochial representative of the laity on the deanery synod for the whole or any part of each of two successive terms of office may not be nominated for election under Rule M(6)(1) to serve as such for the whole or any part of the term of office immediately following the second of those terms". CRR M8(5).*

*However, if such a resolution is passed, this does not apply to a term of office which the person concerned is serving as a result of having been elected to fill a casual vacancy.*

## **Accounts**

**29. Do these have to be presented at the APCM?**

*Yes! The Church Representation Rules require the PCC's accounts to be independently examined or audited and to be presented to an Annual Meeting.*

*The Church Representation Rules also require the PCC to consider and (if thought fit) approve the accounts prior to the APCM. Once approved, the accounts must be signed by the Chair presiding at that meeting of the PCC.*

*As charities, PCCs are required by the Charities Act 2011 to prepare accounts for each financial year. The specific requirements for each PCC will depend on the PCCs income. If a PCC is a registered charity, the PCC will be required to send a copy of its accounts to the Charity Commission.*

**30. Are there any other requirements relating to the accounts which PCCs should be aware of?**

*The accounts approved by the PCC must be published in such form as the PCC decides (whether electronically or otherwise) and a copy of the signed accounts must be made available for inspection for at least 7 days before the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.*

*The PCC needs to take responsibility if there is difficulty in meeting this obligation. Please contact the Diocesan Director of Finance urgently on [finance@trurodiocese.org.uk](mailto:finance@trurodiocese.org.uk) if this is a problem.*

**31. What is the Annual Report that is supposed to be presented to the Annual Meeting?**

*PCCs are required, under the Church Representation Rules, to present an annual report on its proceedings and the activities of the parish generally in the previous year. Whilst the Vicar may give a report and the Churchwarden(s) will report on the fabric of the church, and there may even be other reports from church groups and organisations, the annual report is legally a separate document from the financial statements. However, the annual report and accounts (including the independent examiner/audit report) should always be presented together in the same publication.*

*Please do take time to read the requirements for this report, which can be found in the booklet **PCC Accountability** published by Church House Publishing.*

## **Independent Examiner or Auditor**

**32. Should our PCC's accounts be independently examined or audited?**

*The PCC's accounts must be independently examined unless the overall level of income in the year exceeds **£1 million** in which case they must be audited. This is a legal requirement. Further helpful information concerning financial thresholds can be found on the parish resources website at the following link:*

*<https://www.parishresources.org.uk/resources-for-treasurers/thresholds/>*

**33. When is the Independent Examiner or Auditor appointed?**

*The Independent Examiner or Auditor are appointed by the APCM. However the appointment is usually made on the advice of the PCC.*

*The PCC should satisfy themselves that the candidate for appointment is suitably qualified with the necessary financial experience or qualifications to undertake their responsibilities, as well as being independent from the PCC. The name should then be submitted to the Annual Meeting for approval. It is normal to allow for the PCC to agree the remuneration (if any) of those appointed.*

*The Charity Commission guidance on the independent examination of charity accounts can be found [here](#) which is where guidance on the selection of a suitable Independent Examiner and the duties they are expected to perform can also be found.*



## Electoral Roll

### **34. Are electoral rolls ever completely deleted so that all people have to re-apply to be on a new roll?**

*The preparation of a new Electoral Roll takes place every six years. This last took place in 2025 and therefore a new roll is required in 2031.*

*The old electoral roll will be completely erased and all those wishing to be on the new roll will have to re-apply.*

*The rules for doing this are laid down in the Church Representation Rules:*

*Not less than 2 months before the APCM in 2031 a notice should be affixed on or near the principal church door stating that a new roll is to be prepared. The notice must remain on display for at least 14 days. Applications to be on the roll can then commence. For the following 2 Sundays the congregation at each service in the parish should be informed of the preparation of the new roll.*

*The new roll shall be completed not less than 15 days or more than 28 days before the APCM and then shall be put on public display not less than 14 days prior to the APCM. During this time of public display any errors or omissions can be corrected but no names can be added to or be removed from the roll. Upon the commencement of this public display the new roll takes effect and determines who may participate in the business at the APCM and who may stand for appropriate elections. At the APCM the new roll is received.*

### **35. If I have missed the deadlines for being on the electoral roll, when can I then apply?**

*Applications for inclusion on the roll can then commence after the APCM has concluded in the normal way.*

### **36. Will we have to go through this procedure every year?**

*No - the preparation of a new electoral roll happens every 6 years, with revisions taking place in the years in-between. After 2031 the next occasion for the preparation of a new roll will be in 2037.*

## Decisions

### **37. Can the Annual Meetings make legally binding decisions?**

*Other than the election of Churchwardens, PCC and Deanery Synod laity members and any resolutions or decisions outlined in the answers to Q10, Q13, 16, Q20, Q22 and Q25, and the acceptance of the annual accounts any other motions or resolutions passed by these meetings are not legally binding.*

## Forms to be completed

### **38. What forms have to be completed before the Annual Meetings?**

*A notice should be placed on the church door or notice board signifying the date of the Annual Parish Meeting to elect Churchwardens and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (in Form M1).*

*A notice should also be displayed signifying the preparation of a new Church Electoral Roll (in Form 3) OR the revision of the existing Church Electoral Roll (in Form 2).*

*(PCCs should also remember to display the PCC's accounts prior to the APCM - see the answer to question 29.)*



*Copies of these forms are available on the diocesan website -*

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

*The APCM Procedure checklist provides a concise summary of all that needs to be done before and after the meeting. This is also available on the diocesan website.*

### **39. What forms have to be completed after the Annual Meetings?**

*We no longer require an APCM returns form to be completed and sent to the Diocesan Office. Once their parish APCM has taken place, PCC Secretaries will be sent an email with instructions on how to complete an electronic audit of their parish officers.*

*However, in the years that elections to Deanery Synod take place, we will require parishes to complete and return a form to the Diocesan Office listing the names and contact details of their newly elected Deanery Synod Representatives. This will next be due in 2026.*

*A notice also needs to be placed on the church door or notice board giving the names of those elected as churchwardens and those elected to the PCC.*

*The APCM Procedure checklist, as mentioned above, provides a concise summary of all that needs to be completed before and after the meeting. It is available on the diocesan website <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/parish-facing-support/pccs/apcm-parish-resources/>*

### **40. Where can I get further information?**

*Copies of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 are available from Church House or on the internet at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2001/1/contents>.*

*The Church Representation Rules are available from Church House Publishing ([www.chpublishing.co.uk](http://www.chpublishing.co.uk)) and are available on-line [here](#)*

*Copies of all forms that are required for Annual Meetings are available on our website at <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/parish-facing-support/pccs/apcm-parish-resources/>*

## **First PCC Meetings**

**We are commonly asked questions about business that the first meeting of the newly formed PCC has to transact. Here are the most common questions.**

### **41. Who is the chair of the PCC?**

*The minister is the chair of the PCC.*

*The PCC must elect a lay member as vice-chair and the vice-chair acts as chair*

- (i) where this is no minister;*
- (ii) where the minister is absent or unable to act for some other reason or;*
- (iii) where the minister invites the vice-chair to act as chair.*

*See CRR M19 for further details.*

**42. What appointments should the first PCC meeting make?**

*The PCC must appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer for the year ahead at its first meeting. They should also appoint an Electoral Roll Officer. Any co-opted members (see Q24) would normally be approved at this meeting.*

**43. Who can be appointed as Treasurer?**

*The Treasurer does not legally have to be a PCC member. However, the PCC have a duty to satisfy themselves that their financial affairs are being properly managed. They will have the right to ask questions of any Treasurer who is not a PCC member and will want regular updates on finances at each meeting. It would be normal therefore to co-opt any Treasurer who is appointed and who is not otherwise a member of PCC. The PCC will also want to satisfy themselves that the candidate for appointment as Treasurer has the necessary financial and bookkeeping skills*

**44. What if no Treasurer can be appointed?**

*One of the churchwardens would be required to act in this instance. However, this is a less than satisfactory arrangement and the PCC would be expected to make all reasonable efforts to secure the services of an appropriately qualified Treasurer.*

**45. What is the Standing Committee?**

*The Church Representation Rules lay down that the PCC shall have a Standing Committee. The Standing Committee may transact the PCC's business between meetings of the PCC, but may not discharge a duty of the PCC, and may not exercise a power of the PCC which is subject to the passing of a resolution by the PCC or compliance by the PCC with some other requirement. See CRR M31.*

**46. How is the Standing Committee constituted?**

*The number of individuals comprising the Standing Committee will depend on how many names are on the parish electoral roll on the date on which the Annual Parochial Church Meeting is held.*

*If there are more than 50 names on the electoral roll, the Standing Committee shall consist of the minister, each churchwarden who is a member of the PCC or, if there are more than two, such two or more churchwardens as are appointed by resolution of the PCC and at least two other members of the PCC appointed by resolution of the PCC (the number of which should be at least equal to the number of churchwardens on the Standing Committee).*

*If there are less than 50 names on the electoral roll, the Standing Committee shall consist of the minister and at least two other members of the PCC appointed by resolution of the PCC (these individuals may, but need not, be a churchwarden).*

*It may be helpful for parishes to consider whether it would be appropriate for the PCC Secretary and Treasurer to be members of the Standing Committee.*