

THE PROVINCE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN JERUSALEM AND THE MIDDLE EAST

DIOCESE OF CYPRUS AND THE GULF

Model Constitution for Parishes

Note to be removed in using this model for a named Parish.

At various points throughout the text there are notes in italic script to point out where a parish must make a choice of provision. This is necessary, for example, when deciding whether to appoint churchwardens by procedure A or B, and when deciding the number of elected places for lay members of the Church Council. For further advice please contact the archdeacon.

THE PARISH

1. The Parish shall be known as the Anglican Parish/Church of .
This constitution is authorized by the Bishop of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf and is subordinate to the Constitution of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf.

CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL

2. The Parish shall have an Electoral Roll, to be kept by an appointed officer, on which the names shall be entered of lay people who have applied to be enrolled and have signified in writing that

They have been baptised

They are full members of either:

A Church of the Anglican Communion

or

A Church in communion with the Provinces of the Anglican Communion

or

A Church which is a member of the World Council of Churches

They are aged 16 or over

They have habitually attended public worship in the Parish for a period of not less than three months prior to enrolment; or habitually attend worship in the Parish for a minimum of 3 months during the year.

Their names are not on, or will be removed from, any other Electoral Roll in the same Archdeaconry.

If the requirements above cannot be met application may be made to the Bishop for his judgement.

3. The Electoral Roll shall be reviewed annually by the Electoral Roll Officer at least 30 days before the Annual Church Meeting. The Officer shall remove from the Roll the names of all persons who have died, who have requested that their names be removed, or who have ceased to be habitual worshippers.
4. A new Electoral Roll shall be prepared every five/six (*to be agreed) years.
5. The names of those who apply for inclusion on the Electoral Roll within the fourteen days immediately preceding the Annual Church Meeting shall not be added to the Roll until after that meeting.
6. Adjustments to the Roll must be ratified by the Church Council.

7. Any person aggrieved by the removal of his name from the Electoral Roll may appeal to the Archdeacon, or the Bishop if the Archdeacon is the Parish Priest, whose decision shall be final.

THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

8. The Parish shall hold an Annual Church Meeting each year and no later than the last day of April, which all persons whose names are entered on the Electoral Roll are entitled to attend.
9. At least 14 days' notice of Church Meetings shall be given by a notice displayed at the church and by an announcement at church services on at least the two preceding Fridays/Sundays.
10. Meetings shall be open to all who wish to attend but only those whose names are on the Electoral Roll may vote. However, the Parish Priest and Churchwardens, or in a vacancy the vice-chair and churchwardens, may request the Bishop to rule that only those on the Electoral Roll may attend a particular meeting.
11. The quorum for the meeting shall be one quarter (25%) of the total number of those named on the Electoral Roll.
12. The Parish Priest, or in his absence the vice-chair of the Church Council, shall preside and shall have a casting vote. In a vacancy the Archdeacon will usually chair the meeting.
13. Any motion proposed at the Annual Church Meeting shall take the form of a recommendation to the Church Council.
14. The business of every Annual Church Meeting shall include:
 - receiving and approving audited accounts for the Parish or part thereof
 - the appointment of an auditor (however so described), who shall not be a member of the Church Council
 - the appointment of a safeguarding officer
 - the receiving of reports from
 - the Parish Priest,
 - the Churchwardens
 - the safeguarding officer
 - and such other officers, committees or organisations as the meeting may determine,
 - any matter concerning the life and mission of the Parish or part thereof since the last Annual Meeting,
 - the election of Churchwardens, and deputy wardens for the forthcoming year (*see below*)
 - the election of Church Council members (*see note 18*)
15. Audited and approved accounts must be submitted to the Finance Officer and the Archdeacon as soon as possible after the Annual Meeting.

SPECIAL OR EXTRAORDINARY CHURCH MEETINGS

16. The Parish Priest may convene a **Special** Church Meeting in addition to the Annual Church Meeting. If there is no Parish Priest this may be convened by the vice-chair of the Church Council. The rules relating to the convening and conduct of an Annual Church Meeting apply. A Special Meeting must be convened if at least 1/3 of the lay members of the Church Council formally request it.
17. An **Extraordinary** Church Meeting shall be summoned by the Secretary if at least 1/3 of the lay members of the Church Council, or 1/10 of the persons named on the Electoral Roll request this in writing.

The rules relating to the convening and conduct of an Annual Church Meeting apply. The notice calling the meeting shall specify the business to be conducted and only this business shall be transacted.

THE CHURCH COUNCIL

18. The Church Council shall consist of the following voting members:
 - The Parish Priest, who shall be chairman ex officio
 - All other clergy licensed to the Parish
 - Readers licensed to the Parish
 - The Churchwardens and any deputy wardens (*see note 36*)
 - Lay members elected at the Annual Church Meeting whose names are properly entered on the Electoral Roll
(*the Constitution shall specify both the number of elected lay members, and whether they serve for 1 year until the next AGM, or for 2, or preferably for 3 years retiring in rotation at the ACM. The Constitution shall also specify how many terms of 1, 2, or 3 years may be served before a member shall be ineligible for re-election for 1 year)
 - Current lay members of the Diocesan Synod or the Provincial Synod
 - Co-opted members, if the Council so decides, not exceeding in number 1/5 of the representatives elected, who shall hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual Church Meeting, without prejudice to their being co-opted for a further term.
19. At its first meeting after the Annual Church Meeting the Council shall elect a member to be vice-chair, who shall take the chair in the absence or at the invitation of the chairman.
20. At its first meeting after the Annual Church Meeting the Council shall appoint one of their number to act as secretary of the Council, and shall appoint one of their number, or co-opt a suitable person, to act as treasurer. The treasurer shall, on demand, present the accounts for inspection by the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Finance Officer.
21. During a vacancy, or extended absence of the Parish Priest, the Archdeacon shall assume authority for the affairs of the Parish.
22. The Council shall meet at least 4 times a year and meetings shall be notified at least 7 days in advance by the Secretary.
23. The Council and the Parish Priest shall work together on matters of general concern and importance to the congregation.
24. In Cyprus, the Council shall be responsible to the Jerusalem and the East Mission Trust (Cyprus) for preserving and maintaining the structure and furnishings of the church buildings in its care.
25. At its first meeting after the Annual Church Meeting the Council shall elect one of its ordinary members to serve for one year on the Executive/Standing Committee (*see note 33*).
26. The Council shall be responsible annually for the appointment of lay representative(s) to the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod, in accordance with requirements of the Diocesan Constitution. The term of office of each elected lay member shall begin on the first day of Synod and shall cease on the day preceding the first day of the following Synod.
27. The Council shall consider any matters referred to it by the Diocesan Synod and shall report to the Synod in accordance with the requirements of the reference.
28. The Council shall have the right to call an Extraordinary Church Meeting (*see note 17*) to discuss any matter within its competence.
29. The Parish Priest or the vice-chair, one of the Churchwardens and four other members, three of whom shall be elected lay members, shall constitute a quorum at any Council meeting.

30. Matters shall be determined by a simple majority of those present, unless the Council decides otherwise. The Chairman shall have a casting vote.
31. The Council shall have the right to nominate any persons to form sub-committees, detailing their duties and authority so far as these are within the competence of the Council.
32. Only the Council may accept gifts on behalf of the congregation.

THE EXECUTIVE or STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

33. The Committee shall consist of:
 - The Parish Priest
 - The Churchwardens
 - The vice-chair
 - The Secretary
 - The Treasurer
 - One other member
34. The functions of the Committee shall be:
 - To plan the business of the Church Council, to prepare the agenda for its meetings and to circulate to members information about matters for discussion.
 - To initiate proposals for action and approval by the Council and to advise it on matters of policy which are placed before it.
 - Subject to the directions of the Council, to transact the business of the Council when it is not in session.

CHURCHWARDENS

(The Constitution should specify the manner of appointing and electing churchwardens by method A, or electing both churchwardens by method B, and whether they serve for 1 year until the next ACM, or for 3 years retiring at the ACM. The Constitution shall also specify how many terms of 1, or 3 years may be served before a churchwarden shall be ineligible for re-appointment or re-election for 1 year)

35. A. At every Annual Church Meeting the Parish Priest shall appoint a churchwarden (to be known as the Priest's Warden) and the meeting shall elect one of their number to be a churchwarden (to be known as the People's Warden). Both churchwardens should be elected if there is no Parish Priest in post.
Alternatively,
 - B. Two churchwardens are elected at the Annual Church Meeting.
36. Where a part of the congregation regularly meets for worship at a place other than the principal place of worship in the Parish the Parish Priest may appoint, or a Congregation Meeting may elect (*in either case specifying the length of service*), a member of that part of the congregation to be a deputy warden (to be known as the N warden, where N is the name of that part of the congregation).
37. Except with the Bishop's permission, Churchwardens and deputy wardens must be regular communicants, confirmed by a bishop in communion with the Metropolitan See of Canterbury, and of at least twenty-one years of age.
38. Churchwardens and deputy wardens are officers of the Bishop, and shall assume office immediately on the conclusion of the Annual Church Meeting. The secretary shall, within seven days of the conclusion of the

Annual Church Meeting, inform the Archdeacon of the names and contact details of the Churchwardens and any deputy wardens.

39. A Churchwarden may resign from office by notifying the Bishop in writing.
40. The Churchwardens shall prepare and keep separate lists of all moveable and immoveable property of, or made available to, the Parish for which they are Wardens, and make such lists available to the Archdeacon when required. Deputy wardens shall prepare and keep separate lists of all moveable and immoveable property used at the places of worship for which they are responsible.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS AND CHURCH COMMITTEES

41. Where a part of the congregation regularly meets for worship at a place other than the principal place of worship in the Parish an Annual Congregation Meeting may be convened by the Parish Priest.
42. At least 14 days' notice of a Congregation Meeting shall be given by a notice displayed at the church and by an announcement at church services on at least the two preceding Fridays/Sundays.
43. Meetings shall be open to all who wish to attend but only those who regularly worship in that congregation and whose names are on the Electoral Roll may vote. However, the Parish Priest and Churchwardens, or in a vacancy the vice-chair and churchwardens, may request the Bishop to rule that only those on the Electoral Roll may attend a particular meeting.
44. The Meeting may elect, a member of that part of the congregation to be a deputy warden (see 36 above), and also a Congregation Committee, consisting of the Parish Priest as Chairman, the deputy warden, and three other persons who must be on the Electoral Roll and worship in that congregation.
45. The deputy warden shall be a member of the Church Council.
46. The Congregation Committee shall have such responsibilities as are delegated to it by the Church Council.
47. The Congregation shall appoint from its membership a minute secretary.

APPOINTMENT OF PARISH PRIEST

48. When the office of Parish Priest is vacant, or is about to become vacant, the Secretary shall immediately inform the Bishop and shall summon a meeting of the Church Council, which shall draw up for the Bishop:
 - A statement of the needs of the Parish and the qualifications desirable in a new Parish Priest.
 - A statement of the financial position of the Parish
 - A Parish Profile
49. The means of recruiting to the post will be agreed between the Bishop, or the Archdeacon acting for the Bishop, and the Council.
50. The Council shall also appoint a maximum of 3 representatives from the Council to join the panel for interviewing candidates.

TERMINATION

51. Should the Church Council at any time cease to exist, all the assets of the Parish shall be vested in the Diocese, The Anglican Church (Cyprus) Limited.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

52. The Council may amend this Constitution, provided that:

Two thirds of the members of the Council vote in favour of each proposed amendment at two successive meetings.

The proposed amendments are approved by the Bishop.

The amendments are considered at the Annual Church Meeting or at an Extraordinary Church Meeting convened for that purpose and each proposed amendment is approved by two thirds of those present and entitled to vote.