



The Diocese of
Southwark

The Venerable Simon Gates
Archdeacon of Lambeth

The Venerable Moira Astin
Archdeacon of Reigate

The Venerable John Kiddle
Archdeacon of Wandsworth

The Venerable Dr Jane Steen
Archdeacon of Southwark

The Venerable Dr Rosemarie Mallett
Archdeacon of Croydon

The Venerable Alastair Cutting
Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich

16th September 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Annual Meetings of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meetings

We are writing to respond to some inquiries we have received following Bulletin 23 from the Coronavirus Task Group. However, we would first like to express our continued thanks to you for the ministry you continue to exercise so faithfully. We are very aware that the continued presence of coronavirus with the consequent changing of circumstances at short notice is in many ways more stressful than lockdown. We understand that you carry the unease and anxiety of many in your congregation during these times, and we appreciate how hard this can be. You continue to be daily in our prayers.

We have particularly been asked about churchwardens following last week's Bulletin. What do you do if your churchwarden or wardens need to resign before you are able to hold the APCM? Some parishes in this situation have appointed Acting Wardens to undertake the work of churchwardens until such time as they, or others, can be formally elected; we fully support this as a course of action. We appreciate that it is not always straightforward to find people who are willing to be churchwardens. A short time as Acting Warden, with an experienced warden able to answer questions, could be a way to introduce new people to the role. If you do appoint an Acting Warden please do inform your Archdeacon's PA and pass on their contact details.

It may be that you have decided to hold your 2020 AMP/APCM in 2021. If this is so, we would nevertheless encourage you to consider holding some sort of informal church meeting this year. You can, of course, do this in a virtual format. Such a meeting could bring people together to hear about the life of the church during the pandemic. Interim reports could be shared (orally / on screen) and counsel taken on any matters of general interest to the parish. Acting Wardens could also be introduced at this meeting.

If you decided not to delay your 2020 parish meetings, you may be wondering whether these can be held in person under the Rules which came into force on 14th September. We understand that these meetings fall under the head of charitable governance and therefore can currently take place in person, obviously in a Covid-secure environment.

Should any churchwarden approach you concerning resignation, may we remind you that this should be tendered in writing to the Bishop of Southwark giving two months' notice. Should a warden have compelling reasons for resigning earlier than the end of the notice period, the Bishop is likely to be sympathetic.

Finally, some of you have asked how you go about admitting churchwardens to office now that this has been delegated to you for 2020. We therefore include with this letter the Declarations wardens must make before taking office, together with the prayers we use for wardens who are unable to attend Archdeacons' Visitation Services.

We hope you find this helpful and once again, please accept our grateful thanks for your part in the ministry entrusted to us all.

The Lord be with you.

Alan Kidd

Simon Gate

Moira Astin

Andrew

Jane Green

Alastair Cutting

The Archdeacons of the Diocese.