

THE DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK

PARISH AND DEANERY MEETINGS (ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION) AND ADMISSION OF CHURCHWARDENS INSTRUMENT 2021

The Bishop of Southwark, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Section 10 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 and Rule 78 of the Church Representation Rules, makes the following provision:

Application

1. The provision made by this instrument applies to each parish in the Diocese of Southwark. It applies with necessary modifications to the parish of Southwark St Saviour with All Hallows.
2. My instrument of 9 September 2020¹ remains in effect insofar as it regulates meetings for the year 2020 or the admission of Churchwardens for that year.

Interpretation

3. In this instrument:
 - a. “**meeting of parishioners**” means the meeting required to be held by Section 5 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 for the purpose of choosing Churchwardens;
 - b. “**APCM**” means the Annual Parochial Church Meeting required to be held by rule M1 of the Church Representation Rules;
 - c. “**convenor**” means the minister of the parish or, if the minister is absent or incapacitated, the person(s) required to convene the meeting of parishioners or APCM by the Church Representation Rules;
 - d. “**electronic means**” means electronic means of communication which allow the person to hear and be heard by other persons participating in the meeting and, where practicable, to see and be seen by those other persons;
 - e. “**minister**”, in relation to a parish, has the same meaning as in Rule 83 of the Church Representation Rules; and
 - f. “**CRR**” means the Church Representation Rules.

¹ Parish Meetings (Deferral and Electronic Participation) and Admission of Churchwardens Instrument 2020

Electronic participation: meetings of parishioners and APCMs

4. When giving notice of a meeting of parishioners or APCM for the year 2021, the convener of the meeting may state in that notice that persons may attend the meeting by electronic means.
5. If the convener of a meeting decides to permit attendance by electronic means:
 - a. the notice of the meeting shall set out full details of how a person may participate in the meeting, or provide a link to a website on which such details are set out;
 - b. the notice of the meeting shall set out whether persons attending the meeting by electronic means may vote at the meeting;
 - c. if the meeting is a meeting of parishioners, the notice of the meeting shall set out how nominations of candidates for the office of Churchwarden may be sent to the minister prior to the commencement of the meeting by those not physically present with the minister;
 - d. the mechanisms by which those attending the meeting by electronic means are to be called to speak or, if relevant, have their votes recorded shall be determined by the chairperson of the meeting;
 - e. any reference in the Churchwardens Measure 2001 or the Church Representation Rules to a “meeting” includes a meeting at which persons may attend by electronic means, and references to the “place” of a meeting or whether a person is “present” at that meeting shall be interpreted accordingly; and
 - f. when giving notice, form M1 may be amended to give effect to any requirement of this instrument.
6. It is for the convener of the meeting to determine whether that meeting should be held:
 - a. solely by electronic means;
 - b. solely by physical attendance; or
 - c. with the option of electronic means or physical attendance,but subject always to any legal requirement and Government guidance from time to time regulating gatherings of persons or the use of buildings.
7. When making a determination under paragraph 6 above, the convener of a meeting shall have regard to the importance of securing that meetings are safe and accessible.

Electronic participation: Deanery Synods

8. The joint chairs of a Deanery Synod may jointly decide that a meeting of a Deanery Synod to be held in the calendar year 2021 may be held by electronic means.

9. If they so decide:
- a. the notice of the meeting shall set out full details of how a person may participate in the meeting, or provide a link to a website on which such details are set out;
 - b. the notice of the meeting shall set out whether persons attending the meeting by electronic means may vote at the meeting;
 - c. the mechanisms by which those attending the meeting by electronic means are to be called to speak or, if relevant, have their votes recorded shall be determined by the chairperson of the meeting;
 - d. any reference in the Church Representation Rules or the Model Rules and Constitution for Deaneries and Deanery Synods to a “meeting” includes a meeting at which persons may attend by electronic means, and references to the “place” of a meeting or whether a person is “present” at that meeting shall be interpreted accordingly.
10. It is for the joint chairs of the Deanery Synod to determine whether a meeting of a Deanery Synod should be held:
- a. solely by electronic means;
 - b. solely by physical attendance; or
 - c. with the option of electronic means or physical attendance,
- but subject always to any legal requirement and Government guidance from time to time regulating gatherings of persons or the use of buildings.
11. When making a determination under paragraph 10 above, the joint chairs shall have regard to the importance of securing that meetings are safe and accessible.
12. Where notice of a meeting has been given specifying a physical place for the meeting and the joint chairs later agree that the meeting should be held by electronic means (or also by electronic means), the joint chairs may arrange for reasonable notice of that decision to be given pursuant to paragraph 9 above to those entitled to attend the meeting and this shall not itself invalidate the previous notice for the purpose of calculating the minimum notice period required by any rule.

Admission of Churchwardens

13. The minister of each parish in the Diocese of Southwark is appointed as my substitute for the purpose of the admission to office of persons chosen for the office of Churchwarden for that parish for the year 2021.
14. If a parish has no minister, or if the minister is unable to act, the reference to “minister” in paragraph 13 above shall take effect as including a reference to the Area Dean of the deanery and to the Archdeacon for the archdeaconry in which the parish is situated.

15. The appointments made by paragraphs 13 or 14 shall not affect my power to appoint further substitutes or the continuing appointment of any person previously appointed as my substitute.
16. A person admitting a Churchwarden to office pursuant to paragraphs 13 or 14 above shall use the form of appointment specified by the Archdeacon.
17. For the purpose of section 6(1) of the Churchwardens Measure 2011, my substitutes may, by providing reasonable notice to those persons chosen as Churchwarden, appoint an appropriate time and place for admission, at the substitute's discretion.

Publicity for meetings during closures of church buildings

18. If it appears to the convenor of a meeting that closures or restrictions affecting a church or licensed building by reason of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to have a significant effect on the ability of persons to receive notice of the meeting, the convenor shall take reasonable additional steps to publicise the meeting and in particular shall, wherever practicable, arrange for notice of the meeting to be given on the website of the parish and/or on the parish's entry on achurchnearyou.com.

Consultation with PCC

19. In deciding how to carry out his or her functions under this instrument, the convenor of a meeting shall, wherever practicable, first consult with the Parochial Church Council or its standing committee.

The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun
Bishop of Southwark

Date: 09 February 2021