



The Diocese of

Southwark

Diocesan Secretary

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To: The Honorary Secretaries of:
Parochial Church Councils
District Church Councils

Cc: Incumbents and Deanery Synod Secretaries

19 January 2022

Dear Colleagues,

I do hope you and your loved ones are keeping well in these challenging times.

In advance of this annual request for information and briefing on the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), Electoral Roll, and other important aspects of parish life, I would like to take the opportunity to thank for all the work that you do for your church. It is greatly appreciated, especially in this difficult time. Please remember that the Diocesan Office is here to help parishes in their work and mission, so if you have any enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

PCC Secretaries & Parish Administrators Zoom Conference: Wednesday 9 February

The Diocese will be running a Zoom information event on Wednesday 9 February at 6pm. There will be contributions by Bishop Christopher, the Diocesan Secretary, and the Archdeacon of Lambeth, who will be able to answer any of your queries regarding APCMs, Parishioners' Meetings, and Churchwarden admissions. There will be additional speakers covering a range of topics from HR and the new Safer Recruitment Guidelines to Finance. A separate email invitation will be sent to you from Henry Metcalfe shortly.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

You will see that there is no extension to the timetable for this year's APCMs which will, as per the [Church Representation Rules](#), need to have been completed by 31 May. APCMs are to be held in-person and there is no permission available for meetings to be held virtually or in mixed-mode. With this being said, you are welcome to livestream the meeting; however, this is for observation only, and those viewing online will not be able to vote, regardless of eligibility.

You are reminded that under the Charities Act 2011, members of the PCC and those elected to Deanery Synods by PCCs are "Charity Trustees" in law. This means that *anyone disqualified under section 178 of the Charities Act 2011, for example because of bankruptcy or conviction for an offence of dishonesty or deception is not eligible*. This is clearly a sensitive issue, and we would advise that when you are seeking nominations, you should print the statement in italics above on all nomination forms and read this statement out at the APCM when the item is taken.

Please see the attached FAQs for more information.

To help you plan your APCMs, we have developed an [APCM Date Tool](#) available on the website which will give the dates of various tasks that are undertaken once you know the date of your APCM. We hope this is helpful.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "APCM Timetable" with the subtitle "Annual Parochial Church Meeting Timetable Calculator for a year in which an existing Electoral Roll is being revised". It features a date input field labeled "Enter APCM date" with a placeholder "dd / mm / yyyy". Below this are three rows of input fields for scheduling tasks: "Revision of roll notice posted by must be at least 14 days before revision starts", "Notice of APCM posted on or by the OUTSIDE of the church door", and "Complete revised roll and post on or by the church door by". Each row has a corresponding "and not later than" or "but not before" field. A note at the bottom states: "New roll remains posted for at least 14 days. During this period errors & omissions may be corrected (but not new names added if no form had been completed before posting). Additional names may not be added until after the APCM". The footer identifies the "Diocese of Southwark".

Electoral Roll Return

I enclose three copies of the Annual Return. On two of these you are required to give the names and contact details for your Deanery Synod representatives following the 2022 elections.

- Parish copy - for display on your Church Noticeboard
- Deanery copy - to send to your Deanery Synod Secretary
- Diocesan copy - to return to the Diocesan Office

It is vital that this information is kept up to date as the Deanery representatives are the electors for various bodies including both General Synod and Diocesan Synod. We would be grateful if you could help us in this process by ensuring that these forms are returned as soon as possible after the APCM and no later than the **1st of July 2022**, as outlined in the Church Representation Rules 2020. Copies of the documents are available on the website.

Online Parish Returns

The Church of England's online parish return system which we use for capturing church membership data (also known as 'Statistics for Mission' or 'congregational count') and parish finance information, remains open for you to put in your information. Given the difficult times we are all still going through, this year's data collection again aims to celebrate and capture the amazing creativity and resilience that our churches have displayed in continuing to offer worship and pastoral support to their congregations and parishioners while many of our congregations were still dealing with the challenges of 2021. This means the data asked for through the Statistics for Mission 2021 form is again a bit different this year, and there will be sections that may be harder than usual to answer.

We are still keen to find out anything you can tell us and your best approximation is fine. If you don't have precise numbers, please don't worry about anything you don't feel able to answer. Attendance at services held in church buildings will be impacted by lockdown and by social distancing arrangements, so please be reassured that, as in 2020, the data

for 2021 will be viewed in this context. Thank you for taking the time to help us understand the picture of our churches.

I'd like to encourage you to enter your 2021 data by the end of January if possible. If you are unable to do that then don't worry, since it is likely that the online parish return system will remain open for a short while beyond the end of the month. The closing date for submission of your financial information is the end of June.

The online system can be accessed here <https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org/> and please do contact us at data@southwark.anglican.org if you have any queries.

Church Buildings; the DAC; Quinquennial Inspections

Along with Incumbents, Churchwardens and others, PCC Secretaries may find themselves involved in tasks of caring for their church buildings and applying for faculties, whether in response to the Coronavirus pandemic (such as installing fixed livestreaming equipment in the building) or other initiatives like as reducing the carbon emissions of church buildings. Please do remember that your Archdeacon and the Church Buildings & DAC team in the Secretariat (Luke Tatam, DAC Secretary; and Duncan Gregory, Church Buildings Officer) are here to help advise on these matters.

- You can contact Duncan regarding: Quinquennial Inspections; sources of grants for maintenance/repairs and alterations of church buildings; guidance on making church buildings more environmentally sustainable; advice on care and maintenance of church buildings.
- Get in touch with Luke for help with applying to the DAC for either initial pre-application advice (which may include input from specialist advisers as appropriate and or arranging 'DAC site visits') or formal advice as part of the faculty application process.

Depending on your query, your Archdeacon may suggest contacting the DAC office and/or others who can assist you in care of church buildings and issues which arise around their use, for example: the Diocesan Registry; the PCC's insurance company; the church's appointed Quinquennial Inspector (usually an Architect).

Each year, approximately one-fifth of the church buildings in the diocese are surveyed by a professional (usually an Architect) under the Quinquennial Inspections system. The Church Buildings Officer is writing to parishes whose church buildings are due for inspection this year, with full details (such as costs and how to go about commissioning the Inspection). If a Risk Assessment has been carried out, Church of England Coronavirus guidance allows for the Inspection to go ahead even in lockdown, as part of work which professionals cannot undertake from home. Please consult the guidance document 'Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public during Coronavirus (COVID-19)' (which can be accessed here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>).

Parish Support

As always you are more than welcome to contact Henry Metcalfe (Henry.Metcalfe@southwark.anglican.org), on any matter that you need help with. He will be able to forward your query onto the right people even if it's not something he can answer himself.

Area Offices

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with your Area Office; they are there to assist and advise parishes in their mission work:

Croydon Episcopal Area Office	6 St Peter's Road, Croydon CR0 1HD	Tel: 020 8256 9630
Kingston Episcopal Area Office	St Mark's Church St Mark's Place Wimbledon SW19 7ND	Tel: 020 8545 2440
Woolwich Episcopal Area Office	Trinity House, 4 Chapel Court, Borough High Street, London SE1 1HW	Tel: 020 7939 9413

Please refer to the Southwark Diocesan Directory on the Diocesan website for contact details of Diocesan officers.

General Enquiries on Legislation and Churches

There is an organisation called *Churches Legislation Advisory Service* and they have a website with a number of useful publications. I suggest that you make occasional visits to the site. www.churcheslegislation.org.uk.

Another useful website which you may find useful is www.parishresources.org.uk.

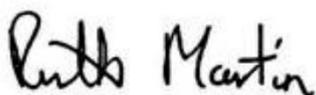
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On behalf of the whole of the Secretariat, including Henry with whom you will be most in contact, I would like to wish you and the PCCs you serve a fulfilling year as we journey along together as disciples of Christ in challenging times. We hope to see many of you at our PCC Secretaries & Parish Administrators Conference on Zoom on 9 February.

Thank you very much for all that you do.

Best wishes,



Ruth Martin (Lay Canon)
Diocesan Secretary



Annual Parochial Church Meetings and Meetings of Parishioners for 2022

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can we hold parish and deanery meetings electronically (via Zoom or similar)?

No. The Archdeacons have decided that it is best for meetings to be held in person with the appropriate safety precautions in place. It is possible to livestream the meeting to avoid observers being in the same room as the meeting; however, only those physically present at the meeting may vote, regardless of eligibility.

2. Who should decide on when and how to hold meetings?

It is usually for the minister to convene parish meetings. The ‘minister’ is the Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge, or a Team Vicar with special responsibility for parish meetings. If there is a vacancy and no Priest-in-Charge is yet appointed, the APCM is called by the vice-chair of the PCC and the meeting of parishioners is called by the Churchwardens. In any case, Bishop Christopher asks that decision-makers consult with colleagues on the Parochial Church Council wherever practicable.

The decision about whether to hold a Deanery Synod meeting by electronic means rests with the joint chairs of the Deanery Synod.

3. What happens to elected representatives of the laity on PCCs?

At each APCM, at least some of the elected representatives of the laity on each PCC retire. These retirements will take place when the 2022 APCM is held. Until that time, the elected representatives of the laity remain in office.

4. What about our Charity Commission requirements?

Financial statements and annual reports are primarily the responsibility of the PCC. The view of the Diocese is that parishes should not delay making any filings with the Charity Commission in order to await the APCM. Parishes should keep records of decisions taken using the flexibility provided by Bishop Christopher’s decision.

5. What happens to Churchwardens?

Churchwardens should be admitted as soon as possible after they are chosen. This will be done by an Archdeacon in a special service called a Visitation. The Archdeacons (through the Archdeacons’ PAs) will advise on the procedure for Churchwarden admission and co-ordination of Visitations.

If there is a delay in a Churchwarden being admitted at a visitation, the Churchwarden-elect may sit on the PCC in the period between their election and their admission.

January 2022