



The Diocese of

**Southwark**

**Diocesan Secretary**

Ruth Martin

Trinity House  
4 Chapel Court  
Borough High Street  
London SE1 1HW

s 020 7939 9400

f 020 7939 9434

[ruth.martin@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:ruth.martin@southwark.anglican.org)

[www.southwark.anglican.org](http://www.southwark.anglican.org)

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

Cc Incumbents  
Deanery Synod Secretaries

19 January 2023

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 these uncertain times. 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' Training and Conference: Saturday 10 June**

The Diocese will be running a conference and training event on Saturday 10 June at 10am. 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 your role as PCC Secretaries and Parish Administrators. There will be additional speakers covering a range of topics from HR and the new Safer Recruitment Guidelines to Finance. A separate email invitation has been sent to you from Charles Hudson-Beddows. If you have not done so already, and would like to attend, please use this link: [Click Here](#).

### **Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)**

You will see that we are, once again, following the usual 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 text with corresponding input fields: "Revision of roll notice posted by must be at least 14 days before revision starts" followed by an input field and "and not later than" followed by another input field; "Notice of APCM posted on or by the OUTSIDE of the church door" followed by an input field and "notice must be in place for two Sundays before APCM"; and "Complete revised roll and post on or by the church door by" followed by an input field and "but not before" followed by another input 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 of the form reads "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 2023 elections.

- |                       |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Parish copy (white)   | - | for display on your Church Noticeboard  |
| Deanery copy (yellow) | - | to send to your Deanery Synod Secretary |
| Diocesan copy (blue)  | - | 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 **1 July 2023**, as outlined in the Church Representation Rules 2022.

Forms can either be returned via the post to The Diocesan Secretary, Trinity House, 4 Chapel Court, Borough High Street, London, SE1 1HW or E-Mailed to [governance@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:governance@southwark.anglican.org). They can either be filled in digitally (with an electronic signature) or scanned in and sent. For this reason, the forms are available on the website in a Microsoft Word format to make this as easy as possible: <https://southwark.anglican.org/support/for-our-churches/agms-and-pccs/>.

## Deanery Synod Elections

These take place every three years and were due to take place at the APCMs in 2020. As previously indicated last year, those parishes who were not able to undertake these elections were required to do so at their delayed 2020 APCM. This has resulted in the 2020-2023 'triennium' only lasting for two years for some representatives. The Church of England decided that the existing triennium dates should continue, so as not to disrupt other governance timelines, such as General Synod. Any casual vacancies that remain may also be filled.

When conducting the elections at your APCMs please refer to the scheme table below, as agreed at Diocesan Synod in November 2022, for how many Deanery Synod representatives you can elect:

Total Electoral Roll*	Number of Lay Representatives to Deanery Synod
25 or fewer	1
26 - 75	2
76 - 125	3
126 - 200	4
201 - 300	5
301 - 400	6
401 - 600	7
601 upwards	8

*\*Total Electoral Roll numbers for a parish or individual church electoral roll numbers for multi-church parish at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2022*

*The Church Representation Rules require that you use the electoral roll number from 2022 not 2023.*

An election leaflet accompanies this letter, and copies will be sent to parishes, to encourage membership to deanery synods. We especially welcome proposals from younger members of your congregations and the Diocesan Synod, in November 2022, "encourages all PCCs and APCMs, having regard to the Diocesan Anti-Racism Charter, to identify suitably qualified people of UKME/GM Heritage as candidates for election as their lay representatives on Deanery Synod."

In addition, the Diocesan Synod "encourages all PCCs and APCMs, in the light of their particular context, to consider the use of the new power contained in the Church Representation Rules 2022, to set limits on the number of consecutive terms that their elected lay members may serve on Deanery Synod, whilst recognising the importance of continuity, experience and the role of Deaneries in advancing the Southwark Vision."

A copy of the Roles of Deaneries and Rules and Constitution of Deanery Synods can be found on the [website here](#).

## **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. As 2022 saw a greater return to 'normal' after the difficulties of 2020 and 2021, this year's data collection is important in celebrating the creativity and resilience our churches displayed during this time. It is important that we recognise the exceptional work which continued the offering of public worship and pastoral support our churches gave to congregations and parishioners when support was needed the most. Thank you for taking the time to help us understand the picture of our churches.

I'd like to remind and encourage you to enter your 2022 data by the end of January if possible. Although, 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](mailto:data@southwark.anglican.org) if you have any queries.

## **Parish Support Fund**

The Parish Support Fund 2024 materials will be distributed digitally to you and your incumbent at the end of June 2023. We would be most grateful if you could share the materials with your PCC and include the discussion of your 2024 pledge in your PCC's agenda between July and September. This will allow you to submit your pledge by the submission date in mid-September.

## **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 with initiatives such 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) are here to help advise on these matters.

You can contact Luke 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; 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 DAC Secretary 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).

## Parish Support

As always you are more than welcome to contact Charles Hudson-Beddows ([Charles.Hudson-Beddows@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:Charles.Hudson-Beddows@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](http://www.churcheslegislation.org.uk).

Another useful website which you may find useful is [www.parishresources.org.uk](http://www.parishresources.org.uk).

On behalf of the whole of the Secretariat, including Charlie 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 10 June, however we understand there may be questions in the time leading up to this year's APCMs. Once again, may I reiterate that you are very welcome to get in touch with the Diocesan Office should you have any queries.

Thank you very much for all that you do.

Best wishes,



Ruth Martin (Lay Canon)  
Diocesan Secretary

Enc:

3x SG7 Forms