

Constitution

1. **Establishment**

A new Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) should be established and operative in the parish of St. Andrew's, Dumfries, in the diocese of Galloway by September 2009.

2. **Guidelines**

Whilst taking into account the special needs of the individual parishes the guidelines for PPCs should remain faithful to the basic nature of PPCs outlined in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Code of Canon Law. The Constitution of the PPC is to be submitted to the Bishop of Galloway for approval. The dissolution of a PPC, for whatever reason, is a matter for the Bishop.

3. **Membership of the Pastoral Parish Council**

Members shall be baptised Catholics who (even if they live outside the parish boundaries) participate in the life and worship of the parish and are available to attend a minimum of half the meetings in the space of one year.

3.1. **Selection of Members**

Nine (9) Members of the PPC will be elected by the parish community following a period of time to inform all parishioners of the nature of PPCs and of the process for election, and three (3) members will be co-opted by the Parish Priest.

3.2. **Composition of the Parish Pastoral Council**

The PPC shall consist of:

- The Parish Priest who is *ex officio* President of the PPC
- The members elected by the parish in general, and co-opted by the Parish Priest, including office bearers, who shall number not more than twelve (12).

3.3. **Representation**

A broad representation of the whole parish is the ideal; what is essential is that the members of the council undertake to be representative of the whole community and focus on what is best for the whole parish not just individual parish groups.

3.4. **On-going formation**

Prayer, reflection and skills training are of paramount importance. To ensure that the Council is effective, on-going formation will be provided for every member of the PPC.

3.5. **Purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council**

The PPC's purpose is to work with the Parish Priest in fostering an atmosphere of prayer and faith development in the whole parish community. Special emphasis is to be placed on the sacramental, liturgical and prayer life of the community. The PPC should also work to strengthen the community's commitment to social justice and caring for the marginalised in society, thereby ensuring that the parish community becomes a true witness to the love of Jesus for all.

Fundraising & social events, and fabric & finance concerns, are not in the remit of the PPC.

3.6. **Period for Membership**

Elected members of the PPC shall serve for three (3) years. To safeguard the continuity and smooth running of the PPC, elections will be every year for three (3) of the seats. Members who will retire at the end of years 1, 2 and 3 will be decided by ballot at the first meeting after the initial election. Retiring members will be eligible to stand for re-election for one more period - no elected member should therefore serve for more than six (6) years continuously. Members who have served for six years will be eligible to stand for election again after a period of three (3) years has passed. Co-opted members service will be decided in discussion between the individual and the Parish Priest. Elections will be held at the Parish AGM in May of each year and new members will become active from the Autumn meeting.

At the resignation of a Parish Priest the PPC will be dissolved immediately. However, at the discretion of the new Parish Priest it may be reconstituted immediately with its existing members, although it is recommended that elections to constitute a new PPC are held within a period of one year. Previous members may stand for election.

The PPC itself may fill any appropriate need or casual vacancy by invitation; the length of service of the person who fills the need/vacancy will be to the next election and will be in addition to the normal 1/3 due for retirement at that election.

3.7. **Responsibilities of all members**

Members of the Council will be required to:

- attend regular meetings of the PPC
- provide input to deliberations of the Council
- assist where possible with the implementation of parish policies

- grow in knowledge and awareness of what is happening in the parish.
- take part in the training/induction of all new Council members and on-going formation.

Any member who fails to attend three (3) consecutive PPC meetings without an acceptable reason will be deemed to have resigned from the Council and will be informed of this in writing by the Chairperson.

4. Office bearers

The PPC will have a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Minute Secretary (if fulfilled by a member of the PPC) elected annually by the PPC. Each retiring office bearer is eligible to stand for re-election only once – limiting their tenure of office to two years. (A non-member Minute Secretary serves for as long as is agreeable between the PPC and themselves).

4.1. President

The Parish Priest has been entrusted with the care of the parish by the bishop, he convokes the meetings and is the president of the Council.

4.2. Chairperson

The chairperson is elected annually by the members of the Council with an option for renewal. The role of the chairperson is to prepare the agenda with the other office bearers and to facilitate the meetings of the PPC. The vice chairperson will stand in for the chairperson when appropriate.

4.3. Minute Secretary

The Minute Secretary, who does not have to be a member of the PPC, is responsible for keeping a record of the meetings and for circulating relevant material to the Council members.

5.1. Meetings

The PPC will meet every three (3) months, with the option of extra meetings should they be considered necessary. These meetings are in addition to the AGM. No meetings of the PPC may take place without the presence of the Parish Priest, except with his express permission. All meetings will begin and end with prayer, and should last no longer than 90 minutes.

5.2. Process

The collaboration between the Parish Priest and the PPC is integral to each stage of the parish decision-making process. In virtue of his office the Parish Priest presides over and ratifies all stages of the process leading up to and including final choices and implementations. This collegial process respects the authority of the Parish Priest and the integrity, expertise and deliberations of the members of the Council. Above all, the Gospel mandate of mutual love, listening and understanding, should prevail among all the members of the Council.

5.3. Agenda

The agenda for each meeting will be finalised by the chairperson and the president of the Council and should be circulated to Council members in advance of the meeting, together with any notes or other relevant material required. Minutes of the meeting will be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting has taken place.

5.4. Quorum

A quorum for all meetings of the PPC will be 50% of actual membership plus one (1).

6.1 Committees

A Core Group will be established consisting of the Parish Priest and PPC office bearers. Its remit is to prepare for PPC meetings and in general to ensure that the PPC functions effectively.

6.2. Ad Hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees may be set up for specific purposes and with a definite time limit, e.g. planning a special celebration for the parish. These committees should comprise parishioners with the relevant expertise for the task, and at least one member of the PPC to liaise between the committee and the PPC.

7 Amendments to the Constitution

Proposed amendments to this document should be submitted in writing to the PPC for discussion and decision at its next meeting, and for ratification at the next AGM.