# Text Description automatically generated

# A GUIDE TO THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Are you a newly appointed member of a PCC, or someone who is considering standing for election but would like to know more about the roles and responsibilities of membership?

If the answer to either question is yes, then we hope that this guide will answer any questions or concerns you might have, and help you to enjoy your time as a member.

This guide is intended to be an introduction to membership, and a source of guidance. Your clergy will be able to provide further guidance or, if you are looking for more detail on the workings of the PCC, you will find some suggestions for further reading at the end of the guide.

# WHAT IS THE PCC?

The Parochial Church Council is the governing body of a parish church. It is also a charity. A PCC with an annual income of more than £100,000 must be registered with the Charity Commissioners; those with an income below this threshold, whilst not currently required to register, must comply with all other charity laws. St Barnabas PCC has an income of more than £100,000 and so we are a registered charity.

The PCC has legal status and the Church Representation Rules apply

# WHAT DOES THE PCC DO?

The PCC is a team made up of members of clergy and lay members of the church. Together they are responsible for the overall wellbeing, practical as well as spiritual, of the church, the church members, and the church buildings. The PCC also has a duty to promote the mission of the church within the wider community. Some of the responsibilities are devolved to the Vicar and Churchwardens but to quote from the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956 section 2 ‘It shall be the duty of the Vicar and the PCC to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish’. Members of the PCC have the right to be consulted, to know what is proposed, and to have the opportunity to express an opinion on it.

The Vicar is usually the Chairman of the PCC. A Lay Chair (vice-chair), a treasurer, and secretary will usually be elected to office at its first meeting after the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM).

# PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Prayer and Worship are at the heart of the work of the PCC. The PCC should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for public worship and provide an opportunity for people of all ages to meet for prayer and worship.

In practice this might mean agreeing on the format and timings of services that will meet the needs of the church members, providing facilities for younger members and families, setting up Bible study or Prayer groups.

# MISSION AND OUTREACH

The PCC has an important part to play in promoting the mission of the church, amongst the congregation and in the wider community, and members of the PCC should demonstrate their commitment to the Christian ethos, through leadership, by example and by witness, in the parish. The PCC is encouraged to develop, and maintain, a Mission Action Plan (MAP), to review the life of the church and identify mission opportunities.

# Every member should be involved at each stage of the MAP process – the development of the plan, its implementation, and a regular review process.

# PASTORAL CARE

The PCC and its members have a duty to support their clergy, prayerfully and personally. They have a duty to support the members of the congregation and to extend a welcome to all who visit the church, to members of the church community and to those visiting the church at other times. The church has a duty of pastoral care to all who live in our communities, whether members of the church or not, and PCC members are expected to take the lead in demonstrating that care.

# FINANCE

The PCC will appoint a treasurer, and sometimes an assistant treasurer or a Finance Sub-committee (such as in St Barnabas), to manage the day to day finances of the parish. The treasurer does not need to be a qualified accountant (though a very large parish might consider it appropriate to appoint a qualified accountant). He/She must understand how to maintain books, must have a good knowledge of the parish and the work of the church, and importantly must have the full confidence of the PCC membership. The treasurer will keep members informed on the financial situation and present a full report to each PCC meeting. PCC members are Trustees of a charity and are responsible for managing the Church’s finances. They must ensure that all funds are properly accounted for,

the books properly maintained, and the PCC annual accounts inspected or audited, and formally approved by the PCC, prior to the APCM.

In law, the PCC is *a body corporate.* This means that it is a separate body from the people who serve on it so PCC members are not liable for any debts incurred by the PCC. However, the trustees do have certain responsibilities under the Charities Act and members should acquaint themselves with [*Trusteeship, an introduction for PCC members*](https://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CofE_TrusteeBooklet-v4.pdf)which provides more detailed guidance.

# BUILDINGS

The PCC is responsible for the care and maintenance of the fabric of the church, and any other buildings owned by the church. In practice the PCC may appoint a Buildings subcommittee/Fabric Officer to assist them but the PCC members should be aware of any issues relating to the buildings and they have the responsibility of deciding on them and voting on items of expenditure.

# THE PCC MEETING

The PCC is required by law to meet at least four times a year (one meeting may follow on from the APCM) though some PCCs may decide to meet more frequently. In St Barnabas we usually meet 6 times a year.

The PCC should take time at these meetings to consider and discuss, and if appropriate vote upon, matters concerning the Church of England arising at a higher synod or referred down to the PCC by the Bishop or by the deanery, diocesan or General Synod.

The PCC may also on occasion decide to send information, an opinion or a motion up to the deanery synod. The PCC meeting should be a forum for open discussion with every member feeling able to ask a question or voice an opinion.

# WHO CAN BE A MEMBER OF THE PCC?

If you are 16 years old or over, have been on the electoral roll of your parish for at least 6 months and are an actual communicant, **YOU** can stand for election to your PCC.

**What skills do I need to be a member of the PCC?**

Skills may be too prescriptive a word, and it is better perhaps to say that someone interested in becoming a member of the PCC will be:

* A committed member of the congregation
* Interested in and involved with the life of the church and the local community
* Willing to learn and to share ideas, experience and gifts
* Caring
* Able to listen to another’s point of view

# Some golden rules PCCmembership

# Dos

* Attend meetings (and on time)
* Read the papers before the meeting, be prepared
* Ask if in doubt (especially important for new members)
* Try not to fall out with your fellow members!
* Listen to all the arguments being put forward before making up your mind
* Enjoy being a member of the PCC!

# Do nots

* Volunteer for a task unless you are sure that you have the time to complete it

The PCC needs thinkers and doers, questioners and listeners **but you do not have to be**

* a saint
* a theologian
* an expert

# Though nobody will mind if you are!

**THE PLACE OF THE PCC IN THE WIDER CHURCH**

We are part of the Diocese of Oxford. The Diocese of Oxford is made up of a number of parishes over a large geographical area comprising Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Reading and Milton Keynes. A diocese is divided into Deaneries. St Barnabas & St Thomas the Martyr are part of the **City of Oxford Deanery**. Each parish in the deanery elects from within the congregation one or more Deanery Synod Representatives (we are entitled to 3 representatives). The deanery synod reps from each parish meet together a few times a year and function as a **Deanery synod.** They work to bring together the views of their parishes on common problems, to discuss and formulate common policies on these problems, to foster a sense of community and interdependence among those parishes, and generally to promote ‘the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.’ Each deanery has an Area Dean who chairs the deanery synod in partnership with an elected lay co-chair. Synod membership comprises all licensed clergy in the deanery area, and lay members elected, triennially, by each parish. Deanery synod members themselves elect the clerical and lay members of Diocesan synod, triennially.

**Diocesan synod** is the main governing body of the diocese. Matters of mission, strategy, governance and, as the Board of finance, budgets and accounts are ultimately under the authority of the synod.

**General Synod**, the national governing body for all matters affecting the Church, comprises Bishops, and clergy and laity elected by deanery synod members every five years.