**The Parochial Church Council | Guidance for Members**

**Introduction**

Parochial Church Councils were set up by an act of parliament in 1919. The aim of the PCC as started in the “PCC (Powers) Measure, 1956” is *“to co-operate with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.”*

**Legal Responsibilities**

The PCC, though not the owner, is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the church building and its contents.

The PCC owns and is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the church hall and its contents, and a house designated for the use of the Associate Minister (149 Hermitage Woods Crescent).

The PCC receives income through gifts, donations, fees and rents and has sole responsibility for determining how this money is spent.

The PCC has the right in conjunction with the incumbent to determine whether worship in the parish church is according to the Book of Common Prayer (1662) or Common Worship (2000).

PCC members in law are the trustees of a charity and have all the responsibilities that charity law places on trustees. This includes the requirement to present an annual report, together with accounts to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

In addition to its specific legal responsibilities the PCC has the right to be consulted on other matters by both the incumbent and the diocesan and deanery synods. It also has a right to consider and discuss matters concerning the Church of England, or any other matter of religious or public interest, but not the doctrine of the Church of England.

**Risk Assessment**

Under charity legislation the PCC is responsible for identifying and protecting the congregation against risks with regard to finances, buildings (especially health and safety), and people (especially safeguarding). PCC members are not individually liable unless it can be proved that we have not acted reasonably in planning the work of the church. PCC members are required to complete Safeguarding training provided through Guildford Diocese.

**Membership**

The PCC comprises: All licensed clergy; the Churchwardens; Lay representatives of the Deanery Synod; Lay representatives of the Diocesan or General Synod (if any); Elected lay representatives of the PCC from St John’s and Emmanuel churches; any co-opted members.

The vicar is *ex-officio* chairman. The meeting elects a lay vice-chair who may chair the meeting in the incumbent’s absence, and appoints a treasurer and a secretary.

**Meetings**

The PCC meets 6 times a year (in April, June, September, November, January and February), normally on a Tuesday evening at 8pm at St John’s Church, with one meeting a year held at Emmanuel. PCC members are expected to prepare for these meetings by reading and considering all reports distributed before the meeting.

In the intervening months, if necessary, the PCC’s standing committee meets. This group, appointed by the PCC and consisting of the clergy, wardens, treasurer and two PCC members, ensure the smooth running of the church between PCC meetings. Smaller matters not needing a full PCC meeting, or urgent matters which require attention before an extra meeting of the PCC can be convened, may be dealt with by this committee.

The PCC occasionally forms sub-committees to meet between full PCC meetings to carry our matters referred to them by the PCC. Such matters may include building projects, evangelism or World Mission.

**Understanding PCC biblically**

*“…whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’” (Mark 10:43-45)*

No Bible concordance has an entry for ‘PCC’! The best equivalent is the term *fellow-worker*: we are *fellow-workers/co-workers[[1]](#footnote-1)* with Christ for the gospel. We are servants of Jesus, servants of one another and servants of the world.

Note that in God’s word we are told that *‘If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.’* (1 Timothy 3:1). By extension, the same could be said of PCC membership. In other words it is good to want to serve God and his people and his world, and this is to be encouraged. We should honour and uphold one another in our task. What the Lord looks for in such people (and you can read this for yourself in 1 Timothy chapter 3) is that we should be people of Christian character who hold firmly to the truths of the faith. No great or special gifts are needed.

Please understand that we are not looking for perfect Christians – there is no such thing. We are looking for people who are committed to God, to his people and to his world. We might flesh out these expectations and responsibilities as follows:

1. Our commitment to God

The congregation has a right to expect PCC members to be people who have a personal trust in Christ and who desire to live for him. This relationship with God should be nurtured by regular Bible reading and personal prayer during the week.

1. Our commitment to God’s people

Likewise the congregation will expect PCC members to be committed to the church family of St John’s and Emmanuel. This will be expressed in attendance and participation in Sunday services; in supporting and praying for the church’s leaders; in sacrificial financial giving as God enables. PCC members are encouraged to belong to a home group.

1. Our commitment to God’s world

PCC is about the spiritual life of the church, and our responsibilities for the building, finances and fabric should be seen in this light. This includes our mission to spread the gospel in our parish and around the world. Therefore PCC members are strongly encouraged to play an active part in our evangelistic enterprises. This includes the evangelistic work of prayer, and PCC members are warmly encouraged to support the monthly prayer meetings.

1. Romans 16:3; Romans 16:9; Romans 16:21; 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 6:1; 2 Corinthians 8:23; Philippians 2:25; Philippians 4:3; Colossians 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)