

**THE PCC**

**A Guide for Members**

May 2023



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| **CONTENTS:** |
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| --- | --- |
| Introduction | **3** |
| What Is It? | **4** |
| What Does it do? | **5** |
| PCC and the Congregation | **6** |
| Responsibilities and Duties | **6** |
| Membership of the PCC | **7** |
| PCC Meetings | **9** |
| The Diocese of Norwich | **11** |
| Terminology | **11** |
| Further Reading | **12** |
| Parish Map | **13** |

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| **INTRODUCTION:** |
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This guide has been prepared as a brief introduction to service on, and membership of, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Holy Trinity Norwich.

At the risk of being patronizing, it might help to consider the terms in order:

* ‘Parochial’ simply means to do with a Church of England parish. In the context of Holy Trinity this is the parish of Heigham . The parish is defined by five roads, the A147 (Inner Ring road), The Earlham Road, Mill Hill Road, Mount Pleasant and the Newmarket Road (a map is included at the end of this handbook). The current population is approximately 5,500.
* ‘Church’ simply means a gathering of Christians. When speaking about how believers relate to each other the Lord Jesus said *“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”* (**Matthew 18:20**). Flowing from this whenever the New Testament uses the term ‘church’ it does so to refer to a gathering or congregation of believers; and never to a building.
* ‘Council’ can be defined as “an advisory, deliberative, or administrative body of people formally constituted and meeting regularly.” As we shall see below, there are elements of all three in the responsibilities of a PCC.

Taking these elements together a PCC is simply a council of committed Christians working with the Rector to lead the mission of the body of Christ in a particular geographic location.

So what, then, is the mission of the Church? At the end of Matthew’s gospel are the following words of Jesus, known as the Great Commission:

*“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* (**Matthew 28:18-20**)

Our current verse of the year, vision and goals are published separately and guide our PCC prayers, agendas, strategic discussions and decisions.

The PCC has a crucial role in praying for and working towards this vision.

In prayerful pursuit of our mission we expect PCC members to live by the following values:

* ***Christian values***: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (**Galatians 5:22-23**);
* ***Core values common to many evangelical churches***: Worship (God at the centre), Word (Scripture), Welcome (of newcomers) and Witness (sharing the message about Jesus Christ, especially his cross and resurrection);
* ***PCC values***:
	+ Lead by example as a follower of Christ through grace, in public and in private;
	+ Support our church vision in prayer, evangelism, attendance at Sunday services and key events, service and giving;
	+ Show mutual trust, love, openness, respect for authority, humility, and unity during our meetings.

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| **WHAT IS IT?** |
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The PCC is a team of people (both clergy and lay members) who together assist the Rector oversee the parish church. Along with being trustees it is also a charity.

The PCC has a legal status (it is a ‘body corporate’ which means that it is a separate body from the people who serve on it) and the Church Representation Rules apply. As a charity a PCC must comply with all charity laws and, depending on the annual income, register with the Charity Commission.

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| **WHAT DOES IT DO?** |
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Together, the team of people constituting the PCC are responsible for the overall wellbeing (practical and spiritual) of their church members and buildings, as well as sharing a responsibility to promote the gospel in the wider community.

The general functions of the PCC are set out in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

Section 2 (1) states:

*It shall be the duty of the minister and the parochial church council to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish.*

Members of the PCC are consulted about matters of principle, vision and policy and may express an opinion on them.

Section 2 (2) states:

*The functions of parochial church councils shall include –*

*(a) co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;*

Functions (b) to (e) cover the link between the PCC, the Deanery Synod and the Diocesan Synod.

At Holy Trinity the PCC have formed a number of committees and Action Groups to assist in this work. They are:

1. The Standing Committee: Can conduct the business of the PCC between meetings and formulates the PCC Agenda.
2. The Administration & Finance Action Group: Assists the treasurer in managing the finances and administration of Holy Trinity.
3. The Mission Action Group: Recommends to PCC how to spend the money that we set aside for gospel mission outside our parish. This group also plays a vital role in maintaining close links with our mission partners.
4. The Fabric Group: Helps maintain and undertake minor improvements to the buildings that the Lord has wonderfully provided for our use.
5. From time to time other groups may be formed to meet a particular need.

Each Action Group has a number of PCC members serving on it, but, with PCC approval, able to recruit suitable individuals from the congregation.

There are three elements to the collaboration between the clergy and the PCC:

1. Vision generating;
2. Load bearing;
3. Policy making/governance.

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| **PCC AND THE CONGREGATION:** |
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At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) at which PCC members are elected, parishioners have the opportunity to discuss matters of general concern for gospel mission in the parish.

The PCC takes note of the views of the parishioners expressed. Section 2 (3) of Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 states:

*In the exercise of its functions the parochial church council shall take into consideration any expression of opinion by any parochial church meeting.*

The more that the PCC know about the views of the members of the congregation, and the more the members of the congregation know that their views are respected by the PCC, the better it is for everybody in the Church!

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| **RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:** |
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1. *The Church Building:*
	1. The Quinquennial Report: Every 5 years an architect makes a report on the state of the church building. The report will usually list urgent work that needs to be done, work of a less-urgent nature and longer-term items for planning and budgeting.
	2. Insurance: The PCC should insure the church and its contents against fire, theft and other usual risks.
	3. Annual Inspection and Report: Annually the Churchwardens conduct or arrange an inspection of the church and its contents and prepare a ‘Fabric Report’. This is presented to the PCC meeting prior to the APCM and then presented to the congregation during the APCM.
	4. Terrier, Inventory and Log Book: The terrier is a record of all land belonging to the church. The inventory is a record of everything else that belongs to the church. The log book is a record of all repairs and alterations carried out to the church building. The Churchwardens are responsible for ensuring annually that all the documents are up to date with the assistance of the Fabric Action Group.
2. *Other Property:*The PCC should not acquire any interest in land without the consent of the Diocesan Board of Finance as the rules for Church conveyancing are more complicated than normal.
3. *Conduct of Financial Affairs:*
The PCC has overall charge of all expenditure and the Treasurer to the PCC is usually a member of PCC.

The PCC should make an annual budget and take steps to raise the money required. At the end of the year the PCC should present the APCM the audited/examined accounts and be ready to take questions. The PCC and the Rector must, together, decide how money collected should be distributed.

The PCC is the employer of all staff (with the exception of clergy, who are employed by the Church Commissioners) and is responsible for salaries and contracts.
4. *Church Appointments:*When a Rector leaves there is a vacancy (known as an interregnum) and the PCC has an important role in choosing the successor. The PCC prepares a written summary or profile describing the conditions, needs and traditions of the parish and the kind of Rector they feel the parish needs. It also appoints two lay (non-clergy) parish representatives to discuss with the bishop and patron who should be appointed. Our patron is the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS).
5. *Church Services:*
Together the PCC and Rector determine what general forms of service to have on Sunday. The Rector is responsible for the planning and content of services.
6. *Compliance:*The PCC is responsible for ensuring that Holy Trinity is compliant with all relevant Charity, Health & Safety, Employment and Safeguarding laws and Diocesan policies and procedures.

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| **MEMBERSHIP OF THE PCC:** |
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***Appointment of the PCC:***

Certain people are members of the PCC by law:

* All Priests and Deacons licensed to the Parish (this does not include retired clergy);
* Any lay workers licensed to the parish;
* The Churchwardens
* Such Readers, if any, as the annual meeting determines, and who are on the electoral roll of the parish (currently the PCC appoints one for a three-year term)
* Any person on the electoral roll who is a member of:
	+ Deanery Synod;
	+ Diocesan Synod;
	+ General Synod;

In addition to these members (known as *ex officio* as they are members by virtue of the office they hold) there are members who are elected and co-opted.

Elected members are chosen by the APCM through an election process, and co-opted members are chosen by PCC.

The number of elected members on the PCC is based on the number of individuals on the Electoral Roll of the parish. Our PCC has nine elected members, with three elected each year.

A person who is to be elected should:

* Have been on the Electoral Roll for at least 6 months. If they are under 18 years old then they must be on the Electoral Roll but the six months is not necessary;
* Be over 16;
* Consent to being appointed;
* Have taken communion at least three times in the previous year.

Normally a person should also have been confirmed, or at least be ready and desirous of being confirmed.

A person who is to be co-opted does not need to be on the Electoral Roll but should be over 16 and receive communion. Clergy not already licensed to the parish can be co-opted on to the PCC.

A member of PCC will be:

* A Christian desiring to grow by grace in their love for, and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ;
* A committed member of the congregation supportive of our evangelical and reformed convictions;
* Interested in and involved with the mission and life of Holy Trinity and the local community;
* Willing to learn, to share ideas, experience and gifts;
* Caring;
* Able to listen and understand different points of view.

***Length of Service:***

Members of the Deanery Synod are elected by the APCM for a three year term. The standard length of service for elected PCC members is three years, with one-third retiring and being elected each year. Members may not serve more than two consecutive terms (i.e. six years).

***Removal:***

A person ceases to be a member of the PCC during the course of the year:

* If their name is removed from the Electoral Roll;
* If they do not apply for their name to put on the new Electoral Roll when this is being compiled;
* If they become disqualified from being a charity trustee;
* If the bishop disqualifies them from being on the PCC.

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| **PCC MEETINGS:** |
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It is a mistake to think that just because we are Christians there should not be some rules on how meetings run. Equally, it is a mistake to think that a PCC meeting should run like a corporate meeting. The difference is that the Lord Jesus is present at our meetings (**Matthew 18:20**) and in the hearts of the members. This is why our PCC meetings begin with a reading from Scripture and include a time of prayer.

***Arranging Meetings:***

The PCC meets generally twice a term apart from at Easter, Christmas and during the summer holidays (i.e. it meets 6 times a year). One of these may be a half -day meeting on a weekend. Except in an emergency the agenda for a meeting will be circulated a minimum of 9 days before the meeting.

***What Happens at a Meeting:***

The Rector is the chairman of the PCC and at least a third of members should be present. A vice-chair is appointed at the first meeting of the new council.

Sometimes a formal vote is needed and/or useful. Members are asked to vote either in favour or against a motion, or abstain.

***Some Advice for Effective Meetings:***

In order to get the most from, and give the most to, PCC or Action Group meetings you might consider doing the following:

1. Study the agenda and papers before the meeting. Make a note of questions or points you might wish to raise. Consider what your contribution could be. Not all items are for discussion as some may simply be for information;
2. Arrive in good time (our meetings always begin with refreshments) and spend time chatting with and getting to know your fellow PCC members;
3. Keep to the point in discussions;
4. Listen carefully;
5. Healthy conflict is unavoidable when more than two people meet since everyone has an opinion. Do not allow ideas you disagree with to cause ill-feeling. Focus rather on what is best for our mission to the parish;
6. If the Rector makes suggestions, then it is because he believes that it will be best for the parish. He will not always be right but will have a good idea of what is needed in the situation. Give careful consideration to his suggestions and support them unless there is a better alternative;
7. Keep confidences. The general rule is not to discuss matters with others outside of PCC if you are unclear about what is confidential and what is not. Openness is to be encouraged where a matter is not confidential;
8. After the meeting support the decisions made and help to put them into effect (even if you didn’t vote in favour).

***Some Advice for Members:***

Being a member of PCC is not simply about attending meetings. In order to be an effective member **P.L.E.A.D.**:

* **P**ray: Plead to God for effective meetings and positive, Christ-honouring outcomes. Remember that you attend meetings not primarily as an expert or representative, but as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is His glory that you seek, and it is His will that you long to be done in the church and in whatever meeting you happen to be in. Pray for yourself, for your contribution, for being able to listen, and pray that you would be open to God changing your mind.
* **L**isten: Listen to what other members say. The PCC is a team and should work hard to become an effective one. Be ready to listen more than you speak and watch body language to see how people are reacting. Listen outside of the meeting as well.
* **E**nthuse: Committee work might not be glamorous but God can and does work through them. The gospel is good news and we are discussing exciting gospel matters.
* **A**sk: A way of helping meetings along is by asking good questions. Good ones to begin with are “Why does this group exist?” or “What are we trying to achieve?” Then there are questions around who is going to take decisions forward and then more personal and reflective questions about our own contributions.
* **D**ecide: Help the meeting make decisions and action them.

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| **THE DIOCESE OF NORWICH** |
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| Diocese of Norwich | Archdeaconry of Norwich | Deanery of Norwich South | Holy Trinity Heigham plus 11 other Church of England churches grouped in 6 other benefices or parishes.  |
| Deanery of Norwich East |  |
| Deanery of Norwich North |  |
| Archdeaconry of Norfolk |  |  |
| Archdeaconry of Lynn |  |  |

This chart shows the make-up of the Diocese of Norwich

The  Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher, leads the diocese. There are also two “suffragan” (assistant) bishops, of Lynn and Thetford.

The Archdeacon of Norwich has responsibility for supporting church finances and building maintenance/development, and visits each parish in the archdeaconry every three years to monitor mission and management.

Today, the Diocese serves a population of 872,000. Electoral Rolls stand at approx. 70,000.

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| **TERMINOLOGY:** |
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| **Province** | A geographical area divided into a number of dioceses - Canterbury & York |
| **Diocese** | A territorial unit of administration in the church, each in the care of a Diocesan Bishop. Total 44 (30 in the province of Canterbury, 14 in the province of York). |
| **Archdeaconry** | Archdeaconries are the geographical area which an Archdeacon serves.  |
| **Archdeacon** | Archdeacons assist the Bishop with pastoral care for clergy & their families, church properties & buildings, legal and administrative issues. |
| **Deanery** | In church language the boroughs become deaneries. Each deanery has an Area Dean, who is the bishop’s officer in the deanery. |
| **Chapter** | A meeting of all clergy in a deanery. |
| **Parish** | Is a geographical area, having its own church and clergy (Incumbent, Rector, Priest-in-Charge). Parish boundaries do not always follow civil boundaries, especially in London.  |
| **General Synod** | General Synod has been in operation since 1970. It comprises bishops, clergy and lay people. It is the governing body for all matters affecting the church. |
| **Benefice** | A geographical area comprising more than one parish church and its boundary but under the shared oversight of one Rector or Vicar. |
| **Diocesan Synod****Deanery Synod** | Church representation takes place by three-yearly election at both Diocesan and local level. Members of parishes elect Deanery members and members of Deanery Synods elect Diocesan and General Synod members |

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| **FURTHER READING:** |
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You may find one or more of the following books helpful:

* PITCHFORD, John, *An ABC for PCC*
* BEHRENS, James, *Practical Church Management*
* The Church Representation Rules 2021
* WARREN, Robert, *The Healthy Churches’ Handbook*
* MACMORRAN, Kenneth and BRIDEN, Timothy, *Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors*

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| **PARISH MAP:** |
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Holy Trinity Parish, Holy Trinity Norwich, NR2 2BJ. Population 6,500 approx.



