



Changes to the Church Representation Rules

The Church Representation and Ministers Measure 2019 came into force on 1 January 2020. This made numerous changes to the Church Representation Rules. The full text of the new rules can be found [here](#), and a useful introduction to the rules including a basic outline of the Rules and a summary of the main features of the new Rules can also be found there. Church House Publications has also prepared a booklet of the new Rules, which can be purchased [here](#).

The new Rules seem clearer to follow and we therefore hope that they will be more user-friendly in practice than the current Rules.

The following changes are worth particular note by PCCs:

Electoral roll

There is now no need to remove any names from the roll during the year; this need only be done at the time of the annual revision.

The roll may also be published electronically instead of in paper form, and it has now been clarified that the publication version of the roll should include only the names of those entered and not their addresses or email addresses. The same applies if a request to inspect the roll is made. Email addresses as well as addresses should however be held on the master version of the roll if provided.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The deadline for holding the APCM has been extended to 31 May from 30 April. However, we encourage PCCs to hold their APCM before the end of April where possible in order to allow more time for the swearing in of churchwardens and to prepare the list of electors for the elections to General Synod this summer.

Sidespeople are now to be appointed by the PCC rather than the APCM.

Elected members of the Deanery Synod may now only serve for two consecutive terms of office unless the APCM passes a resolution disapplying this limit. The limit does not apply to any term of office which began before 2020, so will not have any impact until the elections in 2026.

PCC meetings

There is no longer a requirement to hold at least 4 PCC meetings a year. Instead the PCC must hold a sufficient number of meetings to enable the efficient transaction of its business. The meeting will only be quorate if a majority of members present are lay.

There is also now more clarity on who is entitled to attend a PCC meeting, although the PCC may of course invite others to attend if it wishes.

Joint Councils

The new Rules allow "connected parishes" to make a scheme (at an annual meeting or special parochial church meeting) to establish a joint council comprising the minister of each parish involved in the arrangement and lay representatives elected, chosen or appointed from among those individuals on the roll of the relevant parishes.

For the purposes of this new Rule, parishes will be "connected" if:

- (a) they each belong to the same benefice;
- (b) the benefice to which they belong is held in plurality with the benefice to which the other belongs (i.e. they have the same incumbent, who must be incumbent of each, not priest-in-charge of any); or
- (c) they are in the area of the same group ministry.

A joint council established by a scheme under the new Rules will have the same legal status as a PCC and the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 will apply to it as if it were a PCC.

The scheme can either transfer all the property, rights, liabilities and functions of the individual PCCs to the joint council, in which case the individual PCCs go into abeyance, or it can transfer only some of them, in which case the individual PCCs continue to meet and exercise the remaining functions.

Electronic communication

The new Rules confirm that where a person provides an email address any communication required or authorised to be given to that person in writing may be sent by email. Where a person's name and address is required to be passed on under the new Rules, then there is also a requirement to pass on their email address. There is therefore no need to obtain specific consent from individuals to using their email address for the purposes of the Rules, although it will still be necessary for other purposes such as marketing.

Personal data

The new Rules provide that any person that handles personal data must ensure that it is held securely and in doing so, must have regard to related guidance issued by the Archbishop's Council. Personal data can be processed in the ways required by the Rules without the need for consent from the individuals. The basis for this is explained in the introduction to the Rules linked to above.

Model rules for parish governance

The new Rules include "model rules" for parish governance (relating to the APCM and PCC meetings). Generally, these model rules reflect the provisions of the current Rules, albeit they are set out much more clearly in one part of the new Rules. The model rules apply to all PCCs by default, but an APCM or special parochial church meeting may make a scheme to amend, supplement or replace the model rules, subject to some exceptions listed in new Rule 12(2).

The model Rules make it clear that, whilst the Standing Committee can conduct business of the PCC between meetings, it does not have the authority to discharge a duty of the PCC or exercise a power of the PCC which is subject to the PCC passing a resolution or complying with another requirement.

Other points to note are:

Preparation of a new electoral roll

The next time a new electoral roll will need to be prepared is 2025 (and thereafter every six years).

Election of parochial representatives to the Deanery Synod

Parochial representatives are to be appointed to the Deanery Synod at the APCM held in 2020 (and thereafter every three years).

Election of members of the House of Clergy and House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod

Deanery Synods will need to elect members to the House of Clergy and the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod in 2021 (and thereafter every three years).

Election of members of the House of Clergy and House of Laity of the General Synod

Deanery Synods will need to elect members to the House of Clergy and the House of Laity of the General Synod in 2020 (and thereafter every five years).

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