

PCC Terms of Reference

For St Luke's Church, 46 Cell Barnes Lane, St Albans AL1 5QJ

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Introduction

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a legal body whose existence and means of working are established in law. However, the way in which the PCC works at a practical level in church life may vary, within the legal framework, quite considerably from church to church and from time to time.

This document sets the context for the work of the St Luke's PCC and provides a guide for our aims and objectives. It also aims to provide the framework for the delegation of responsibilities and means of accountability to other committees and teams that fall within the remit of PCC.

This brief does not re-iterate the law concerning PCCs but is fully compliant with the legal framework of the Church of England.

Background

St Luke's Church is now of such a size, and the business of the PCC such, that a clear agreed framework for sharing responsibility, decision-making and accountability is essential if the PCC and its various sub-committees and teams are to be able to do their job well and promote the life and growth of the church.

Delegation involves, at its best:

- *A clear statement of responsibilities that are to be delegated,*
- *The provision of resources that are needed to exercise the responsibilities*
- *Appropriate guidance as to how the responsibilities are to be undertaken*
- *Appropriate monitoring and accountability (feedback and assessment of progress)*

This brief and its associated documents aim to set in place a workable framework for sharing the responsibility for the life and development of the church.

The Responsibilities of the PCC

Key Aims

To Serve God and our community through the Church at St Luke's by:

- 1. Seeking, establishing and developing that vision for St Luke's that we believe is God's vision for us;**
- 2. Holding the church's vision, determining how it is expressed in practical terms;**

3. **Seeking to uphold, and live by, the church's core values in the way the church shapes its mission and ministry;**
4. **Assessing (on a regular basis) the church's priorities in order to direct the life of St Luke's towards our vision;**
5. **Identifying and directing the means we have (people, spiritual gifts, skills, finance, and resources) that will help address our priorities; also recognising the gaps in our means and discerning how best to address the consequent difficulties;**
6. **Appropriately sharing, delegating and equipping those people, committees and teams that will enable the vision to be worked towards and lived as a Church;**
7. **Providing support and guidance to a) those in leadership, b) those with responsibilities and c) the congregation as a whole in seeking to live out our vision.**

Legal Responsibilities

The Legal responsibilities are set out for the PCC in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956, together with other powers subsequently conferred. The PCC is 'a body corporate with perpetual succession'. It has existence apart from the members who compose it. Briefly the powers of the PCC include the following:

- A. The management of the financial affairs of the church;
- B. The care and maintenance of the fabric of the church (and churchyard);
- C. The power to acquire, manage and administer property for church purposes;
- D. Drawing up of a budget to maintain church work;
- E. The power to levy and collect a voluntary church rate for church purposes;
- F. The power to make representations to the bishop concerning the parish;
- G. Powers, relating to the vicarage, vacancy of the benefice, forms of worship, pastoral re-ordering schemes, sharing of buildings for worship, various responsibilities for the provision of items for church worship.

Together with the incumbent, the PCC has the powers to:

- H. Appoint and dismiss staff and to determine salaries and conditions of service;
- I. To determine how church finance is allocated.

The PCC here will endeavour to undertake these responsibilities on the following basis:

1. To seek to honour God through our work as a Council; and to demonstrate by our example how to work as a group within the Christian community;
2. To establish and to communicate clearly our vision and our priorities to the church on an on-going basis;
3. To identify and stay focussed upon the priority issues of the church;
4. To delegate appropriately to committees, teams and individual church members; to direct and guide where that is helpful;
(Delegation includes: giving a clear brief, giving responsibility and power to make decisions and spend money, providing appropriate support, and being accountable to the PCC)
5. To plan, budget and manage the church's finances and resources wisely;
6. To be accountable to the Church membership (in particular through the Annual Parochial Church Meeting - APCM).

Modus Operandi

PCC procedures are set out elsewhere (see for example the Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors). A summary of the key items is included in Appendix 1.

The PCC will exercise its powers to set up and delegate to committees and teams as the need arises from time to time. The Standing Committee is the only committee required by law and it is established each year at the first meeting of the PCC after the APCM. 'Teams' vary from 'committees' only in their probable shorter lifespan. Appendix 2 includes standing orders for these committees and teams.

In order to enable the PCC to fulfil its aims and responsibilities, it will delegate to the Standing Committee and other committees and teams as follows:

1. A Brief (Terms of Reference) will be provided for each committee/team. It will be agreed by the PCC and reviewed as frequently as the PCC wishes;
2. PCC minutes will provide additional guidance and direction to each committee. Minutes are not to override the Brief. Minutes are easily forgotten and points made easily 'lost'. If a change to the brief is required, then change the brief.
3. Each committee/team is also to work within the 'PCC Expenditure Policy', which sets out the financial framework and powers to spend;
4. An annual Financial Budget
(Drawn up by the PCC each year, ratified by the APCM each Spring.)
5. Each committee/team is to be accountable to the PCC. This includes providing written minutes of meetings and verbal reports as required. It is also incumbent upon the chair of each committee and team to communicate with the PCC, churchwardens and vicar any matters that will help to ensure smooth progress and pastoral sensitivity in all that is done.
6. Each committee/team is expected to come back to the PCC for decisions beyond its brief, for expenditure beyond its budget and for issues that are believed to be sensitive or potentially difficult to handle.

Membership

Current membership entitlement of the PCC is as follows:

- The Vicar
- Clergy licensed to the parish
- Two Churchwardens
- The Reader(s) (As approved by the APCM)
- The three deanery synod lay representatives
- Six lay elected representatives
- Two co-opted members (one normally being the Treasurer).
- Lay Diocesan and General Synod Representatives also have a place on the PCC

The lay elected representatives have a three-year term of office, with two standing down and two new members elected each APCM.

PCC Documentation

A file is maintained holding terms of reference for all committees and teams. It also contains all policy documents. PCC members should be familiar with this file.

There is also a document drawn up by the PCC and vicar entitled, "The Healthy PCC" that is recommended reading for PCC members.

Appendix 1

Guidelines for PCC Members and Procedures

This is a brief summary of the key guidelines. Full legal provisions and further details are given in the Handbook for churchwardens and Church Councillors.

Membership

Ordained clergy licensed to the parish; lay workers licensed to the parish; churchwardens; readers (subject to APCM approval); all Deanery-, Diocesan-, General- synod representatives; representatives elected by the APCM; members co-opted by the PCC. (All laity must be on the electoral roll).

Term of office

Elected representatives serve a term of three years; there is no limit currently on the number of terms members may serve.

Officers of the Council

- The Minister of the parish shall be chair of the PCC;
- A lay member shall be elected vice-chair;
- A Secretary to the PCC may either be appointed from within the PCC or beyond its members;
- The PCC may elect a member (or joint members) to be treasurer, else it falls to the churchwardens;
- The PCC shall appoint an electoral roll officer who may or may not be a member of the PCC;

Meetings

The PCC must hold at least four meetings each year.

The chair may convene a meeting of the PCC. (S)he is required to call a meeting within seven days of a signed request from at least one third of the members of the council.

Public notice of each meeting is to be given 10 days before the meeting. Members are to personally receive notice at least 7 days prior to the meeting, including the agenda for the meeting together with any motions and business proposed by any member of the council and received by the secretary.

There is provision for emergency meetings, whereby three clear days' notice must be given

Chair of meetings

The chair does so if present, though the practice of sharing the chair with the vice-chair is increasingly practised. The vice-chair does so if present and the chair is not. Members elect a chair if both chair and vice-chair are absent.

Quorum

At least one third of the membership of the PCC need to be present in order to conduct the business of the meeting. It seems sensible to adopt the convention of rounding to the nearest number (mathematically) for the sake of clarifying size of quorum etc. (EG 3.4 is rounded to 3; 3.5 is rounded to 4). This convention is suggested in the light of inconclusive advice from the Archdeacon and Registrar to the Diocese.

Visitors and Observers

Visitors and observers are welcome to attend PCC meetings, but may not speak or contribute unless invited to do so by the chair.

Order of Business

The agenda is to be followed unless changed by resolution.

Regular items to be included will be:

- Apologies for absence
- Conflicts of interest
- Confirming the minutes of the last meeting
- Matters arising from the minutes
- Receiving minutes of subcommittees and working parties (Where established by the PCC)
- Matters arising from these minutes
- Correspondence
- Any items requested by the Deanery or Diocese
- Confidentiality – items to be withheld from the public record

Voting

Every member has equal voting rights. Decisions are made by a majority of votes. In the case of a split vote, the chair has a second casting vote.

Minutes

Minutes shall record the names of members present. At St Luke's the minutes also record those who send apologies and those who are absent from each meeting.

At St Luke's members will receive emailed draft minutes as soon after each meeting as is practical. Members have a week to feedback any corrections or raise any substantial objections to their publication before the next PCC meeting.

The PCC's policy is to obtain approval of the minutes of each meeting from the PCC by email and to circulate them within 21 days of the meeting. Minutes so approved are then to be displayed in the Lower Hall. Ratification of the email approval of the minutes to be done at the next PCC meeting.

A member may request to have recorded the manner in which his/her vote was cast on any resolution.

Papers submitted to a PCC meeting are to be available any church member on request to the PCC secretary.

Adjournment

The PCC may adjourn its business as it wishes.

Standing Committee

The PCC shall have a standing committee of not less than five persons (Minister, churchwardens and at least two other members). It has the power to transact the business of the PCC subject to any directions given by the Council.

Other Committees

The PCC may appoint other committees for the various aspects of the church's work. These committees may include people who are not PCC members.

Reports for the Annual General Meeting

Every committee is to give a summary of its activities and interests that come under its remit, providing it as a written report to the AGM for the previous calendar year.

Appendix 2

Standing Orders for Committees and Teams

For the sake of brevity, references to 'committees' means both committees and teams.

Membership

Membership of committees may be reviewed by the PCC. Committees may invite other people to their meetings on an ad hoc basis for help and advice. At least one person will be a PCC member.

All changes in the committee membership are to be promptly notified to the PCC.

Meetings

Meetings will be held according to the brief of the committee. The chair may convene a meeting, giving reasonable notice, together with an agenda for the meeting. Notice and agenda will normally be at least 7 clear days.

All members of a committee may submit items for the agenda of their meetings.

Chair of Meetings

The chair may be appointed by the PCC and, in any case, must be approved by the PCC.

It is the chair's responsibility to ask another member to act as chair in his/her absence.

Quorum

Either 3 people or at least half of the committee, whichever is the greater.

Agenda

Regular items to be included will be:

- Apologies for absence
- Conflicts of interest
- Confirming the minutes of the last meeting
- Matters arising from the minutes
- Correspondence
- Confidentiality – items to be withheld from the public record *

* Items should rarely be considered confidential. Items requiring confidentiality would typically be of a personal nature such as health or employment related, or where a person's reputation might be at stake.

Voting

Every member has equal voting rights. Decisions are made by a majority of votes. In the case of a split vote, the chair has a second casting vote.

A member may request to have recorded the manner in which his/her vote was cast on any resolution.

Minutes

Minutes will be taken at all meetings (unless specifically stated in the Terms of reference) to include, as a minimum, the decisions taken at each meeting together with a summary of all the main points discussed.

Minutes are circulated to the committee, the PCC and the Mission Area Teams, who are to all to receive a copy. A copy is to be displayed in public in the Lower Hall within 21 days.

Confidentiality

Items deemed confidential by the committee must be minuted and made available as part of the minutes circulated to the committee and the PCC. Such items will be withheld from the public record.

Conflicts of Interest

Each meeting is to note in the minutes or notes taken whether or not there are any conflicts of interest arising in any of the agenda items. Any person having a conflict of interest is to leave the meeting for the duration of that item.