



**THE SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF THE  
MURRAY OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF  
AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED**

# **A Guide to the Parochial Administration Ordinance**

# Preface

This guide aims to assist Parishes with the operation of the Parochial Administration Ordinance passed by Synod in 2021.

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## Qualification, Duties and Responsibilities of the Office of a Churchwarden or Parish Councillor

### Qualifications of a Churchwarden

Churchwardens are communicant members of the Church in a Parish in accordance with the Constitution of the Diocese and shall be not less than eighteen years of age.

"Communicant" means a member of the Church who receives Communion at the least three times in the year.

### Duties and Responsibilities of Local & Peoples

#### Churchwarden:

*The common duties of the Local and Peoples Churchwardens are:*

- ✘ To be an integral part of the leadership of the Faith Community co-operating with the Priest in Charge in the initiation, conduct and development of the work of God and His Church within the Faith Community and Parish.

- ✘ To be the executive officers of the Faith Community in respect of matters pertaining to the Faith Community to which they are appointed.
- ✘ To maintain order in the Church and Church grounds<sup>1</sup>.
- ✘ To ensure that all things pertaining to the celebration of divine service are provided and to see that everything is fit and proper for the due performance thereof.
- ✘ To make available all documents and records for the inspection of the Vicar-General or Bishop and to supply them with any information or explanations when requested.
- ✘ To report to the Bishop any serious neglect or failure on the part of Clergy in the fulfilment of their pastoral duties and liturgical and canonical responsibilities
- ✘ To perform such duties as are prescribed by the Parochial Administration Ordinance or any other ordinance.
- ✘ Subject to any direction of the Parish Council to receive and bank and disburse<sup>2</sup> moneys on behalf of the Parish.

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<sup>1</sup> Not applicable for Faith Communities with no Church grounds

<sup>2</sup> This needs to be in conjunction with Parish Treasurer.

*The separate duties of Local and Peoples Churchwardens are:*

- ✘ In the case of the Local Churchwarden:
  - i. to chair local meetings
  - ii. to deal with the Workplace Health and Safety requirements and Safe Ministry as they relate to the Faith Community in conjunction with the Parish Workplace Health and Safety Officer and Parish Safe Ministry Officer.
- ✘ In the case of a Peoples Churchwarden, to represent the Faith Community on Parish Council and help fulfill roles assigned to Parish Council.

**Duties and Responsibilities of a Priest Churchwarden:**

- ✘ To be an integral part of the leadership of the Parish co-operating with the Priest in Charge in the initiation, conduct and development of the work of God and His Church within the Parish.
- ✘ To be on Parish Council and help fulfill roles assigned to Parish Council.
- ✘ A support person for the Priest in Charge and any other Clergy serving in the Parish.
- ✘ To perform such duties as are prescribed by the Parochial Administration Ordinance or any other ordinance.

## **Duties and Responsibilities of Parish Councillors**

- ✘ Parish Councillors are to be an integral part of the leadership of the Parish co-operating with the Priest in Charge in the initiation, conduct and development of the work of God and His Church within the Parish.
- ✘ Parish Councillors represent all the Faith Communities on Parish Council and help fulfill roles assigned to Parish Council.

## **Safe Ministry Requirements**

- ✘ DHS Working With Children Check
- ✘ National Police Check
- ✘ Safe Ministry Training
- ✘ Child Safe Environments
- ✘ Safe Ministry Check Questionnaire

## **Parish Council**

### **Composition**

- ✘ Priest in Charge.
- ✘ Any fulltime assistant member of the clergy appointed to the Parish.
- ✘ Peoples Churchwardens from the Faith Communities
- ✘ Three Parish Councillors
- ✘ Priest Churchwarden
- ✘ Parish Treasurer
- ✘ Parish Secretary

## **Duties and Responsibilities of the Parish Council**

The Parish Council together with the Priest in Charge is responsible for the Worship, Mission and Pastoral Care of the parish. The Parish Council will work to fund and fulfil these responsibilities and, subject to the provisions of the Parochial Administration Ordinance, shall have the following powers and duties:

- ✘ Coordinate the Mission activities and Pastoral Care of the local faith communities.
- ✘ Develop and monitor a business plan for the Parish and Faith Communities.
- ✘ The insuring, maintenance (including repairs), lease or rental (where applicable) rates, taxes and other like outgoings of all Churches, halls, schools, and other buildings including the Rectory and any other Parish Trust Property and so much of the telephone, internet and other charges (if any) as is not attributable to private use of the Rectory or other dwelling house occupied by the Priest in Charge.
- ✘ The payment of all amounts owing and payable in respect of amounts borrowed by the Parish (whether for capital or interest and whether secured upon Parish Trust Property or not).
- ✘ In all cases not specifically provided for in any Ordinance of the Synod, the maintenance and control of all Parish Trust Property.
- ✘ The preservation and safe custody of all registers, records, documents, plate, and other valuables of the Parish.

- ✘ The payment of stipends, travelling, superannuation and allowances to the Priest in Charge and any other clergy, if applicable, serving in the Parish. These amounts shall not, without the express approval of the Bishop and the Diocesan Council, be less than the relevant stipend, travelling, superannuation and allowances for the time being determined in accordance with any ordinance of the Synod.
- ✘ The payment of Diocesan assessments, insurance premiums and all other expenses payable to the Diocese by the Parish.
- ✘ The management of the financial affairs of the Parish and the appropriating and application of all voluntary contributions and of any moneys raised or held by any organisation connected with the Parish.
- ✘ The determination of the amount to be provided by each Faith Community in the Parish to meet the expenses of the Parish.
- ✘ The provision of all things necessary for proper worship, liturgy, and the administration of the Sacraments.
- ✘ The payment of fees and travelling allowances of any Clergy relieving the Priest in Charge during such annual or other leave as the Priest in Charge may be entitled to take pursuant to any ordinance of the Synod.
- ✘ Confirmation of the minutes of the Annual Meeting and any Special Meeting of a Faith Community within the Parish.
- ✘ Such other powers and duties provided for in this or in any other ordinance or as may be referred to it by a Faith Community or by the Synod.



- ✘ Such other powers and duties as shall be incidental to the Constitution and any ordinance.

### **Specific Roles**

Parish Council must select from its own membership:

- ✘ A Safe Ministry Officer to ensure all Safe Ministry Requirements are met.
- ✘ A Workplace Health and Safety Officer who will work with the Local Churchwardens to ensure compliance with Workplace Health and Safety requirements.
- ✘ A Complaints Officer to receive any grievances concerning the Parish.

### **Meetings**

The Priest in Charge shall call meetings of the Parish Council which must be no less frequent than once in every two months. Parish Councils may meet by electronic means, but at least two meetings each year must be face to face.

### **Chair**

At all meetings of the Parish Council, the Priest in Charge may preside as Chair or nominate a substitute. In their absence, the meeting may choose one of its members to preside as Chair

### **Attendance**

Should a Peoples Churchwarden be unable to attend a meeting of Parish Council, a Local Churchwarden from the Faith Community may attend in place of the Peoples Churchwarden and shall have all the voting and other rights at that meeting.

Local Churchwardens may attend any Parish Council meeting and speak to issues relating to their Faith Community.

## **Agenda**

The agenda items should include:

- ✘ Attendance and Apologies
- ✘ Further Agenda items
- ✘ Minutes from previous meeting
- ✘ Business Arising
- ✘ Correspondence
- ✘ Report from the Parish Ministry Leadership Team
- ✘ Finance Report
- ✘ Business arising out of items (f) & (g)
- ✘ Workplace Health and Safety, Risk Management and Safe Ministry matters
- ✘ Grievances
- ✘ Reports and Recommendations from the Faith Communities
- ✘ Other matters.

## **Meetings**

### **Annual Meeting**

In each Parish, *all Faith Communities shall meet as one in March* on or before the 20th of March each year, such meeting shall be called the Annual Meeting and shall be called by the Priest in Charge or in a vacancy, by a Locum or the Vicar-General.

- ✘ Each Faith Community, when required, shall meet to elect their Local and Peoples Churchwardens prior to the Annual Meeting.

- ✘ Nominations, when required, shall be sought for election of Parish Secretary and Parish Councillors at the Annual Meeting.
- ✘ Faith Communities may submit items of business to be discussed at the Annual Meeting, this should reach the Parish Secretary as soon as is practicable, but no later than the end of February each year:
- ✘ All reports must be made available to members seven days prior to the Annual Meeting.

### **Special Meetings**

The Priest in Charge or the Local Churchwarden of a Faith Community may call meetings between Annual meetings.

- ✘ If the Local Churchwarden calls the meeting, the agenda must be approved by the Priest in Charge. Should there be a vacancy in the office of Priest in Charge, the approval may be given by the Vicar General or the Bishop
- ✘ The business to be transacted at a Special Meeting shall be that specified in the notice convening the same and no other business
- ✘ Special Meetings may be held:
  - ❖ Combined if the subject matter affects the whole Parish.
  - ❖ Separate if the subject matter relates to a Faith Community.



## **Informal Meetings**

Each Faith Community may meet informally to discuss matters of interest:

- ✘ An informal meeting is chaired by the Local Churchwarden.
- ✘ Minutes are not required to be taken but if desired, they may be taken, and should be suitably recorded.
- ✘ The Priest in Charge or his nominee is to be given the opportunity to attend.
- ✘ Informal meetings may make non-binding recommendations to Parish Council.
- ✘ Quorum rules do not apply.
- ✘ This meeting is open to all people associated with the Faith Community not just communicant members.

### **Informal Meetings versus Special Meetings**

A special meeting

- ✘ Is limited to the subject the meeting is called to discuss.
- ✘ Only Communicant members only can vote.
- ✘ Requires a quorum
- ✘ Minimum 14 days' notice
- ✘ Requires minutes and attendance sheets to be completed

An informal meeting is open to all associated with the Faith Community not just communicant members, there is no specific agenda, and it still can make recommendations to Parish Council. In summary, unless there is a specific reason why a Special Meeting needs to be called, an informal meeting gives more flexibility

## **Quorum**

At every Annual Meeting, or Special Meeting of all Faith Communities meeting together, fifteen Communicant members shall constitute a quorum not including the Priest in Charge and any licensed clergy.

At any Special Meeting of a single Faith Community, five communicant members shall constitute a quorum not including the Priest in Charge and any licensed clergy.

If a quorum is not present at any Annual Meeting or at any adjournment, the meeting shall be adjourned for not more than fourteen days as the Priest in Charge or in his absence the majority of the communicant members of the Faith Communities present shall decide.

A Special Meeting at which a quorum is not present shall lapse<sup>3</sup>.

## **Notice of Meeting**

A minimum of 14 days' notice is required for the convening of an Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting. Notice may be given by email or post to members and if practicable shall be read at all services on the two Sundays prior to the meeting is to be held. Such notice shall be signed by the Priest in Charge or Churchwardens and shall specify the time and place of the meeting and the general nature of the business which the meeting will consider.

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<sup>3</sup> [Members present may then hold an informal meeting if they want to.](#)

## **Election and Appointment of Office Bearers in a Parish**

### **Term of Appointment**

All people are elected or appointed to a position for a 3-year term, to be synchronised with the Synod Triennium.

### **Term Limit for Office Bearers**

From 2024, Office Bearers serve for a period of six consecutive years before being required to take a break. The Bishop can waive this with an approach from the Faith Community or Parish. This does not prevent standing again.

### **Local and Peoples Churchwardens**

Each Faith Community, when required, shall meet to elect their Local and Peoples Churchwardens prior to the Annual Meeting.

Faith Communities with no Parish Trust Property may choose to only elect or appoint a Local Churchwarden

### **Priest Churchwarden**

At or within 7 days of the Annual Meeting the Priest in Charge appoints the Priest Churchwarden when required.

### **Parish Councillors**

At the Annual Meeting, the Parish elects two Parish Councillors when required. Faith Communities are encouraged to provide nominations.

At or within 7 days of the Annual Meeting the Priest in Charge appoints one Parish Councillor when required

## **Lay Members of Synod**

At the Annual Meeting, Lay Members of Synod are elected, when required, in accordance with the Election of Lay Members of Synod Ordinance 2022.

Faith Communities are encouraged to provide nominations using the appropriate forms.

Should there still be any vacancies, the Priest in Charge is tasked with filling those positions.

## **Parish Treasurer**

All Parishes are required to have a Parish Treasurer even if they utilise a bookkeeping service.

It is the responsibility of Parish Council to make such an appointment when required.

## **Parish Secretary**

The Parish Secretary may be elected at the Annual Meeting. Should the Annual meeting fail to elect a Parish Secretary, it becomes the responsibility of the Parish Council to make the appointment

## **Auditor**

Parish Council appoints the Auditor who must not be associated with Parish Council or any other body (e.g. guilds) in the Parish.

*Note: Parish Council is not responsible for Mothers Union*

## **Nomination Committee<sup>4</sup>** (formerly Patronage Committee)



The Parish component of this committee is elected at a Special Meeting of all Faith Communities in the Parish meeting as one *when a vacancy occurs*. This meeting is called by the Bishop or Vicar General.

The Parish component comprises of 3 Churchwardens and 3 other communicant members of the Parish.

### **Casual Vacancies**

Any Office Bearer for various reasons can resign at any time and be replaced. Casual Vacancies are filled by Parish Council or the Priest in Charge for his appointments. They may wait for the next Annual Meeting depending on timing.

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<sup>4</sup> Refer Clergy Services Ordinance



## Sale of Land (Including Any Building Thereon)

The procedure set out below must be followed.

The Parish Council must consider the matter at two meetings. The second meeting may not be less than three weeks after the first meeting.

- ✘ At the first meeting the Parish Council must pass a resolution that the Synod be requested to sell or transfer the property (refer Appendix C Parochial Administration Ordinance 2021).
- ✘ The resolution and notice of meeting of the Parish Council to confirm or rescind the resolution must be read at all Sunday services after the first meeting. Members of the Parish and Faith Community shall be invited to make submissions.
- ✘ Objections must be submitted in writing to the Priest in Charge or the Parish Secretary before the second meeting.
- ✘ Parish Council may choose to hold a Special Meeting of the Faith Community, either before the first or the second meeting.
- ✘ At the second meeting the Parish Council must consider all objections and either **confirm** or **rescind** the resolution.
  
- ✘ The confirmed resolution remains effective for 12 months from the date of the approval by Synod (this may be extended for a further 12 months).

✘ The following must be submitted to the Diocesan Council: -

- a) a certified copy of the resolution (refer Appendix C Parochial Administration Ordinance 2021) signed by the Priest in Charge or the person(s) presiding at the meetings of the Parish Council at which the resolution was passed and confirmed.

AND

countersigned by not less than two members of the Parish Council who were at those meetings.

- b) copies of any objections to the resolution.

These should reach the Registrar not less than 14 days before the date of the next meeting of the Diocesan Council.

- ✘ Parish Trust Property may only be sold on the approval of the Synod or the Diocesan Council.
- ✘ Where it is approved that parish trust property will be sold an amount equal to 25% of the net proceeds of the sale shall be retained by the Synod for the purposes of the See Fund. Parishes may apply for an exemption (Sec 66.2) or that this be applied after the approved project is completed

## Difficulties

- ✘ Should a Parish experience a difficulty in the application of any aspect of the Parochial Administration Ordinance, they should contact the Bishop and Diocesan Council for guidance.
- ✘ If necessary, Diocesan Council may grant a local variation for a specific period, this will be reported to Synod.