

So, you want to be a Parish Councillor

The number of parish councillors is determined at the Annual General Meeting each year, **up to a maximum of twenty-one persons NOT including members *ex officio* or Assistant Curate or stipendiary Lay Minister as appointed by the Parish Priest** (*Constitution and Canons*, 37.2). Two thirds of the number of councillors are elected from the floor, the other third is appointed by the Rector.

Membership of parish council is set out in the *Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Brisbane*. With respect the parish council membership is proscribed in the following way:

Parish Council

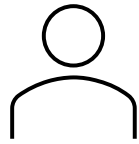
39. In every Parish there shall be a Parish Council which shall consist of the following persons duly appointed or elected in accordance with this Canon -

- (a) the Parish Priest;
- (b) every Assistant Curate and Stipendiary Lay Minister appointed by the Parish Priest to be a member of the Council;
- (c) the Churchwardens;
- (d) the Synod representatives*;
- (e) the Parish Nominators*;
- (f) the Parish Treasurer*;
- (fa) any District Churchwardens elected or appointed in accordance with Section 72 of the Canon, if they elect in writing to be members of the Parish Council;
- (g) such other persons chosen as Councillors as aforesaid.

[*Synod Representative, Treasurer and Parish Nominators are *ex officio* members of Parish Council if not already elected to be members and are counted for the purposes of calculating the maximum membership of 21 persons, together with Assistant Curates and Stipendiary Lay Ministers appointed to Parish Council by the Parish Priest. The Treasurer is elected by PC, not the AGM.]

The makeup of the Parish Council

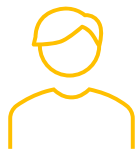
According to model set out in the *Constitution and Canons*, Parish Council is formed in the following way:



Rector



Assistant Curate/Priest



Churchwardens (3)
2 elected and 1 appointed by the Rector



Treasurer (1)
Elected by PC

Ex Officio members (9)



Synod Representatives (2)



Parish Nominators (3)



Parish Priest Appointments

Parish Council

Recommended maximum workable membership – 21, including 9 *ex officio* and up to 8 elected by Parish Electors at AGM (2/3 of the remaining positions) and up to 4 appointed by Parish Priest (1/3 of the remaining positions), appointed by the Parish Priest or Rector.

The Duties of Parish Council

Section 60 of the *Constitution and Canons* sets out the duties of the Parish Council in the following way. Items of note are highlighted in bold.

60. The duties and responsibilities of the Parish Council are as follows -

- (a) **in conjunction with the Parish Priest and Churchwardens to prepare and assist in implementing programmes designed to further the mission and ministry of the Church in the Parish and beyond;**
- (b) to provide and preserve all things needful for the decent celebration of Divine Service the administration of the Sacraments and Rites of the Church and safe keeping of Parish records;
- (c) subject to the Canons, **to have the authority in the administration of Parish funds (including the funds of all Parish organizations), their receipt and disbursement, and in all matters connected with the material assets or liabilities of the Parish;**
- (d) **to be responsible for the drawing up of a budget, being an estimate of income and expenditure of the Parish for the ensuing year, for the presentation of the budget to the Annual Meeting for adoption by the Parishioners, for the amendment from time to time as necessary of the budget as adopted at the Annual Meeting, and for such actions as may be necessary to adhere to the estimate of expenditure and for the estimate of income to be achieved;**
- (e) to receive all payments belonging to the Parish;
- (f) to make provision for the punctual payment of the Parish Priest's stipend, the stipend of all stipendiary Assistant Curates and lay ministers and the salary of all other paid church officers;
- (g) to deduct make and transmit to the General Manager, or to such other persons or bodies as may be required, contributions directed to be made by the following Canons -
 - Superannuation Canon,
 - Long Service Leave Canon,
 - Insurance Canon 1997,and contributions set out in a Schedule of Parish Contributions adopted by Synod;
- (h) so far as the Parish funds lawfully available for these purposes may allow, **to keep in repair the fabric of the Church, the Parish Priest's residence and other buildings and to provide such furnishings and amenities in the residences owned by the Parish as may be prescribed by Regulation;**
- (i) to ensure that any property for which they are responsible is insured in accordance with any direction of the Board of Management under the Insurance Canon 1997;
- (j) to insure the Parish Clergy and all lay workers employed by the Parish under a Workers Compensation policy issued by WorkCover Queensland if required to do so by the Board of Management under the Insurance Canon 1997 and as the Board may direct;
- (k) in conjunction with the Parish Priest and Churchwardens, to report to and be responsible to Synod (through the Commission for Community Welfare and Social Justice) in respect of Parish based endeavours relating to community welfare and social justice;
- (l) **to act as a Council of advice to the Parish Priest and the Churchwardens.**

Parish Council is also responsible to ensure the maintenance of “financial records and accounts; minutes of meetings of Parishioners and of meetings of the Parish Council; inventory of the property of the Parish;” and “the diocesan handbook” (section 67.3)

Frequency of Meetings and Typical Order of Business

Meetings of the Parish Council are held monthly from January to November. The meeting in January is generally a special meeting that finalises the budget for the upcoming Annual General Meeting (February). December may be reserved for celebration of year's end and Christmas.

Typically, the agenda of Parish Council includes,

1. Formal acceptance of the previous minutes.
2. Reports from the Rector, Treasurer and Churchwardens and other special action sub-committees.
3. Reporting of correspondence in and out of the parish.
4. Progression of any items arising from the reports that require approval and/action.
5. Reporting on progression of items included in the parish's Mission Action Plan.
6. Proposing, and providing approval for, specific actions arising from the above.

Parish councillors receive a package of previous minutes, reports, and correspondence to review ahead of the meeting which they are expected to read and digest *beforehand*. Many items may be accepted at the meeting as read without further discussion; some items may be flagged by members of Parish Council at the start of the meeting as requiring some further clarification or discussion, including motions arising and identifying further actions to be undertaken by particular people.

What Qualities are Especially Useful in a Parish Councillor?

Being elected to Parish Council is an important part of parish life. Parish Council provides a unique opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process of a parish. Being a Parish Councillor is an often exciting role and it is an enormous privilege to be part of the leadership and decision-making team, but it also carries unique responsibilities. Arguably some of the most important qualities for a Parish Councillor include the following:

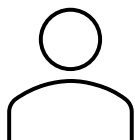
1. Passion for the life and mission of the parish, including the parish community's agreed Mission Action Plan.
2. Team player, including:
 - a. An ability and willingness to separate and subordinate personal agenda items to the stated objectives and direction of the parish as described in the parish's Mission Action Plan.
 - b. A sense of accountability to Parish Council and to the parish community with an ability to balance both in an objective way.
3. Strategic (big picture) thinking that encompasses all of parish life rather than specific task orientated skills and perspectives (these might be better suited to the work of sub-committees).

So, you want to be a Churchwarden

The election of the Churchwardens

The number of Churchwardens is determined each year at the Annual General Meeting. The *Constitution and Canons* currently allow **up to a maximum of three persons**, one or two elected by Electors at the Annual General Meeting and one **appointed by the Parish Priest** (*Constitution and Canons*, 33). Experience has shown that three Churchwardens is an optimal number given the complexity of matters that arise during the year.

Parish Churchwardens are *ex officio* members of Parish Council.



Rector



*Churchwardens (3)
2 elected and 1 appointed by the Rector*

Ex Officio members

The Duties and Responsibilities of Churchwardens

Section 59 of the *Constitution and Canons* sets out the duties of the Churchwardens in the following way. Items of note are highlighted in bold.

59. (1) The duties and responsibilities of the Churchwardens are as follows -
- (a) to attend on the Archbishop or his Commissary or the Archdeacon whenever cited to a visitation;
 - (b) in the event of the death of the Parish Priest immediately to report the vacancy to the Archbishop;
 - (c) to take care that all persons be placed as conveniently as possible during the celebration of Divine Service;

(d) to take care that order and quiet be preserved in and about the Church during the celebration of Divine Service;

(e) to report to the Archbishop any irregularity of conduct on the part of the Parish Priest;

(f) subject to the Canons and any general or special direction of the Parish Council to disburse the funds of the Parish.

(2) The duties and responsibilities of the Churchwardens acting in conjunction with the Parish Priest are -

(a) subject to any general or special direction of the Parish Council to be the executive and standing committee of the Parish Council at times when the Council is not meeting;

(b) to be responsible for the communication of all information and documents required by Canon to be communicated to and from the Parish;

(c) to have the appointment, control and dismissal of all lay officers other than Stipendiary Lay Ministers;

(d) to have the control of all ornamentation and decoration of the Church, subject to appeal to the Archbishop;

(e) to approve any special collections.

Churchwardens also have responsibility (“with the advice of the Parish Priest”) to “take care that a Roll of Parishioners is kept and maintained, and that in the Roll the Electors are identified” (section 67.2)

Frequency of Meetings and Typical Order of Business

Meetings of the Churchwardens are held monthly from January to November. Meetings are held at least a week before Parish Council meetings, usually two weeks ahead to allow the preparation of documents for Parish Council to consider. The meeting in January is generally a special meeting that prepares for the Council meeting that has responsibility for finalising the budget for the upcoming Annual General Meeting (February). December may be reserved for celebration of year’s end and Christmas.

Typically, the agenda of Churchwarden meetings is set by the Rector in consultation with the Churchwardens. It includes matters of importance that have arisen since the previous meeting as well as ongoing discussion of unresolved matters. Motions for the Parish Council to consider may also be prepared.

What Qualities are Especially Useful in Churchwardens?

As being elected to Parish Council is an important part of parish life, it is perhaps even more so for the Churchwardens. Churchwardens have a unique and essential role to play in the good governance of the parish. Being a Churchwarden is an often exciting and always exacting role and, like the role of Parish Councillor, it is an enormous privilege to be part of the leadership and decision-making team. But, like Parish Councillors, the role of Churchwarden also carries some unique responsibilities. The role of Churchwarden is usually a very busy one, Churchwardens have oversight engagement with the whole of the life of the parish, including budgetary matters,

buildings and other facilities, parish programs, office management and the general welfare of both parishioners and clergy, for example. Churchwardens are included in all decision-making that effects the life of the parish.

Arguably some of the most important qualities for a Churchwarden include the following:

1. An ability to think in a strategic (big picture) way that encompasses all of the various facets of parish life, and which embraces a wholistic and longer term vision of the future of the parish from the perspective of a higher and broader vantage point.
2. Passion for the life and mission of the parish, including a high regard for the general welfare of all clergy and parishioners, and including the successful implementation of the Mission Action Plan agreed by the parish community.
3. Dedication to teamwork, including:
 - a. An ability and willingness to separate and subordinate personal agenda items to the stated objectives and direction of the parish, as described in the parish's Mission Action Plan and as determined in consultation with the Rector.
 - b. A sense of accountability to the parish community with an ability to balance sometimes competing aspects of parish life, including the demands and objectives determined by Parish Council, or individual parishioners, in an objective way.

So, you want to be a Parish Nominator

The election of Parish Nominators

Parish Nominators are elected at the Annual General Meeting UNLESS there is an active search for a new Rector that has not been finalised. In that case, active parish nominators are retained for the year. The *Constitution and Canons* mandate the election of three (3) Parish Nominators in the case of a benefice and up to three otherwise (section 38.1).

The Duties of a Parish Nominator

The *Constitution and Canons* document is largely silent on the specific role of the Parish Nominators except where it describes their membership and function within a Presentation Board, whose role is to determine suitable candidates and make recommendations to the Archbishop for the filling a vacancy in the role of Priest in Charge or Rector. Parish Nominators also have a role to play in any decision by the archbishop to fill the position of Priest in Charge or Rector if the Presentation Board is unable to fulfill their function of making a recommendation.

Frequency of Meetings

Parish Nominators do not meet formally unless there is an active Presentation Board for the recruitment and selection of a new Priest in Charge or Rector. In that case they will meet at such times as determined by the responsible bishop, who is the chair.

What Qualities are Especially Useful in a Parish Nominator?

The position of Parish Nominator carries unique responsibilities. When a parish is seeking a new leader, the community relies on its nominators to represent all of them in the discernment process. Equally, the local bishop and the members of the Presentation Board rely on them to provide thoughtful guidance in the selection process.

On top of these responsibilities, Parish Nominators are expected to carry out their duties with the utmost discretion and respect for Diocesan protocols. That includes holding privileged information in a discreet way until the discernment process is completed. For this reason, Parish Nominators are expected to have the following qualities, which in no small measure are similar to those expected of a Churchwarden:

1. They should be able to embrace a holistic and long-term vision of the future of the parish, engage with the diverse hopes and dreams of parishioners, and discern in a balanced and strategic way what are the qualities in a prospective leader that will best serve the current, but also future congregations.
2. They should embrace a sense of responsibility and accountability to the parish community which precludes any personal or factional biases and considerations.

So, you want to be a Parish Synod Representative

What is Synod?

In the Anglican Church, a diocese is governed by a Synod, that is, a Bishop acting with the advice and consent of representatives of the clergy and laity of the Diocese.

In the Diocese of Brisbane, the Archbishop calls the Synod to meet at least once in every year, to discuss, debate and decide on various matters of business such as the diocesan budget, legislation governing the Church (i.e. 'Canon law'), and other issues that concern the Church.

The Synod also elects people to various committees and boards in the Diocese, as well as choosing General Synod representatives (i.e. diocesan representatives in the nation Synod held at least once every four years, which brings together all the dioceses of the Anglican Church of Australia).

The election of the Parish Synod Representatives

Synod consist of three houses being

1. the Archbishop
2. the Clergy
3. the Laity

Parishes and other sections of the diocese may elect 2 of their members to be Synod representatives in the house of Laity. Regarding the election and representation of a parish at Synod, *Synod Canon*, section 4 provides the following:

“Parish representatives

4. Every Parish shall be entitled to be represented in Synod by two lay persons qualified to be Electors, duly elected in accordance with the provisions of the Parishes Regulation Canon.”

Synod representation is for a 3 year period. 2025 will be the second year of the current synod, thus the election of new Synod representatives will not be necessary until 2027.

The Duties of Parish Synod Representatives

Being a Synod Representatives is an exciting experience that should not be taken lightly. Synod Representatives may propose motions to Synod, participate in debates and vote on motions and canons which are the legislative laws of the Diocese. Voting is normally done by the Synod as a whole but may be conducted by the houses. The Archbishop usually assents to the vote of Synod but may withhold assent.

Synod Representative are provided with the business papers and the reports of the various diocesan commissions ahead of the Synod meeting and are expected to have at least perused

them. These documents are available digitally and in paper format if requested. They usually are available one month before Synod meets.

In our deanery, it has been the practice for the members of Synod to meet a week before the Synod to discuss the motions and to give new members an overview of the processes of Synod.

Following Synod, it has been the practice of the representatives to give a brief report to the parish and then to bring to attention of Parish Council the motions that have been passed that are relevant to the parish so that appropriate action may be taken.

Frequency of Meetings and Typical Order of Business

The Synod usually meets during the June school holidays. There is a Synod Eucharist at the Cathedral followed by the first session of the Synod until 9 pm. On the Saturday and Sunday Synod meets at the Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie). On the Saturday Synod commences at 8:30 am and concludes at 6 pm. On the Sunday there is a Eucharist in the Churchie chapel at 8 am followed by the Lay Conference. Synod is in session from 11:30 am to 6 pm. Synod makes the rules and these times which have been in place for a number of years may change.

At the Lay Conference members of the house of Laity meet with the Archbishop, the Assistant Bishops, the General Manager and the Chancellor who is the legal counsel for the Archbishop. Members may submit questions prior to Synod and the Archbishop assigns those questions to himself or those assisting him.

What Qualities are Especially Useful in a Parish Synod Representative?

Synod representatives have a responsibility to the Diocese rather than to their particular parish or organisation. As such they have to consider what is best for the Diocese and that may be at odds with the parish. The representatives must have an open mindset so that they may carefully consider the issues facing their own parish in addition to the issues facing the Diocese, and their own particular biases.

Synod also brings together people of our faith tradition and there is time to talk with them and learn from them about how their parish or organisation implemented a solution to an issue. Being a good listener and interpreting what we hear is a very good quality for being a Synod Representative.

So, you want to be a parish sub-committee member

The makeup of the Parish sub-committees

The *Constitution and Canons* provide the following direction with regard to the forming and membership of committees established to achieve particular tasks and goals.

Committees

61. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Canon, the Parish Council may appoint committees to carry out such of its functions as it may require.

(2) A committee of the Parish Council shall not have the power to delegate all or any of the functions assigned to it by the Parish Council.

(3) The Parish Council may appoint as members of committees any persons who are Parishioners, provided that at least one member of each committee shall be a member of the Parish Council.

In addition, the *Constitution and Canons* provide that the “The Parish Priest shall be a member ex officio of all Committees whether appointed by the Parish Council or by the Parishioners, and shall be entitled to be a member of all societies and organizations formed within the Parish” (section 58). This does not mean that the Parish Priest/Rector is the chair of all committees, nor does it mean that the Parish Priest or Rector is expected to attend all meetings of every committee. It does mean that the Parish Priest or Rector is entitled to be kept abreast of all matters dealt with or discussed at committee meetings.

The Duties of Parish sub-committees

Sub-committees can play a crucial part in the life of the parish and they are an interesting way in which parishioners can become involved in particular aspects of parish life and mission. Sub-committees generally take responsibility for realising particular projects that are related to an agreed goal. Sub-committees report regularly to Parish Council, which has general oversight. Being part of a sub committee is a good way to test your interest in and ability to become part of Parish Council or when considering another role in the life of a parish.

Frequency of Meetings and Typical Order of Business

Sub-committees meet at intervals agreed at their formation. How regularly they meet depends very much on what they are trying to achieve and the timesframes they have been set to achieve their goals. Similarly, the order of business and agenda for meetings will largely be informed by the needs of the group. Some standard agenda items will always apply, such as records of attendance, apologies and a complete record of all motions put to the vote, including outcomes. These minutes will usually inform reports made to the Parish Council.

What Qualities are Especially Useful in a sub-committee member?

The same qualities that apply to Parish Councillors also apply to members of parish committees. These include:

1. Passion for the life and mission of the parish, including the parish community's agreed Mission Action Plan.
2. Team player, including:
 - a. An ability and willingness to separate and subordinate personal agenda items to the stated objectives and direction of the parish as described in the parish's Mission Action Plan.
 - b. A sense of accountability to Parish Council and to the parish community with an ability to balance both in an objective way.
3. Importantly, parish sub-committee members must have a passion and drive to achieve to assist the committee to achieve its goals. This is a role for people who like to get things done – but always within the parameters of teamwork described at point 2.
4. Committee chairs, like Parish Councillors are ideally strategic (big picture) thinkers whose focus is on the entire project rather than specific tasks, but who can appreciate those with particular responsibilities and assist them to achieve their aims when necessary.

What is a parish Mission Action Plan (MAP)?

A Parish Mission Action Plan (MAP) Described

A Parish Mission Action Plan, or MAP, is a document that sets out the strategic missional objectives of the parish, and the plan for how to achieve them. It includes specific actions for members of the parish to undertake (sub-committees, anyone?). Typically, it has a five-year view, but parishes may choose shorter periods depending on their circumstances. The MAP is reviewed regularly, at least once a year, for currency and relevance. Major changes in parish life, such as changes in clergy, may prompt unscheduled reviews of the parish MAP.

The Mission Action Plan is a standing item on the agenda of Parish Council throughout the year with all actionable items reviewed on a monthly basis for progress. The Diocese also requires an active Mission Action Plan as the basis on which major projects requiring its approval are assessed.

Ipswich Parish Mission Plan

The current Ipswich Parish Mission Plan is organised into 6 areas of missional activity, each with a range of activities. The current structure includes the following very broad strategic areas.

- Community Connection
- Worship and Learning
- Families, Children and Youth
- Collaboration Ministry
- Technology
- Sustainable Resources

How Does the Mission Action Plan Operate in Parish Life?

The Mission Action Plan is the document that guides the parish in how to organise and deploy its resources through the year. Initially the Mission Action Plan was developed out of a parish Visioning Day, where parishioners had a chance to discuss their interests and priorities for mission. The Rector and the Churchwardens, with Parish Council review the Mission Action Plan, usually annually but more often is there is a significant change of circumstance warranting a review – based on an assessment of available resources, strategic direction and likelihood of success. Parishioners are given an opportunity to review revisions to the Mission Action Plan at the AGM or at parish meetings if required. Once adopted the Mission Action Plan is a central document that informs every activity in the parish and all proposed activities must align with its broad strategic direction in some way before they can be considered.