

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PCC & DEANERY SYNOD

We are delighted that you are considering joining the PCC or the Deanery Synod. The aim of this brief leaflet is to clarify why they exist, what they do, and how they work. If you have any questions that aren't answered here, don't hesitate to get in touch.

## **What is the PCC?**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the key decision-making body of a Church of England parish. It consists of clergy, churchwardens and others elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) of the parish.

### **A. It is the executive body of a Church of England Parish**

The PCC is the executive body of a Church of England parish and exists to ensure a parish carries out its duties. The PCC is responsible for sharing the leadership, management, and administration of a parish with the vicar.

### **B. It is a body of trustees for a charity**

The PCC is also a legal entity, a charity, and the PCC members are trustees of that charity. As trustees there are certain legal responsibilities, and also guidelines for best practice in terms of governance.

### **C. It is a Parochial Church 'Council'**

A council is a body of people elected to manage the affairs of a group of people. It is formally constituted and has an elected membership. These two things mean it is not self-determining (it doesn't decide what it does but has a formal constitution that directs its activities) or self-selecting (people are elected, not selected, onto the council).

## **What is the PCC responsible for?**

The PCC has the following functions:

### **It exists to enable the church to play its part in God's mission to his world**

The first stated purpose is about mission, and is about helping a church fulfil its purpose, to keep before a church why it exists. On behalf of the church a PCC constantly grapples with the questions of (i) What is the mission of God in our parish? (ii) What ministries do we need for this mission? (iii) What resources do we need for these ministries?

### **It exists to co-operate with the minister in sharing leadership**

The PCC exists to co-operate with the minister, to work alongside in sharing responsibility for discerning how it will enable the church to be about God's mission and ministry in that place.

### **It exists to ensure legal compliance with charity law and ecclesiastical law, in particular in the areas of finance, employment and appointments**

PCC members are trustees of a charity and therefore under obligation to fulfil charity law with due care to governance guidelines. Whilst this should not be seen as overly burdensome, it is important that PCC members understand their care of duty. Key areas here are safeguarding, financial oversight, health and safety, disability, insurance, risk assessment, data protection, and acting as a good employer of any paid workers.

### **It exists to care for the buildings and churchyard so that they may be best suited for the purpose of the church's ministry and mission**

The PCC is responsible for maintenance and repair of the church building, inside and out, especially work recommended by the inspecting architect in the Quinquennial (five-yearly) Report. It is involved in any application to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) for a faculty (permission to effect a change to the church, or its contents, or the churchyard).

### **It exists to be a channel of consultation within the wider Church through its synodical structures on matters that affect the Church locally and nationally**

These structures were put in place to ensure a means by which the Church of England could 'talk' about important matters, enabling local churches to have a voice in wider Church issues, and decisions of the wider Church to be permeated down through the life of local churches.

## **What is my role as a PCC member?**

Put very briefly, to work with the other members of the PCC to ensure the effective running of the parish. This will involve:

- **Prayer** Members are encouraged to pray for the meetings, other members and the life of the parish. There are various resources we provide to help with this.
- **Attendance and preparation** PCC members should aim to attend meetings and to read minutes, financial statements and papers before each meeting, considering how best to contribute to the items to be discussed.
- **Contribution** Each member of the PCC is valued for what they bring: their gifts, skills, experience and knowledge. We expect people to offer these in service of the aims of the PCC, both in the meetings and outside the meetings in the wider life of the church.
- **Values** PCC members are part of the leadership of the church, therefore they are expected to model the core values at the heart of church life in their own spiritual journey and the practical outworking of that in their daily lives. Whilst none of us will do this perfectly, part of our way of working will be to help each other live as disciples of Jesus.
- **Connection** It also helps if PCC members attend major activities not just in the parish but in the diocese and deanery, so that they feel part of the wider church family and are aware of what is going on.

## **PCC Meetings**

The PCC usually meets 10 times a year. Eight of these are on a Tuesday evening starting at 7.45pm and the other two meetings are 'Away days', normally held in one of the parish buildings.

## **PCC Sub-Committees**

The PCC has a number of subcommittees, where substantial work is done. Members of the PCC are expected to be a member of a subcommittee. They are:

- Fabric
- Finance
- Health and safety
- HR
- Income working party
- Mission
- St Andrew's
- Staff/remuneration

## **Mission Subcommittee**

We are looking for someone to chair the Mission Subcommittee – not necessarily a PCC member.

## Who can be elected to the PCC?

Anyone can be on the PCC who is:

- at least sixteen years of age;
- on the Electoral Roll of the Parish for at least six months
- and not disqualified (because of laws about charity trustees, safeguarding etc)

This year we need to elect up to **four PCC** members to serve for a three-year term and we have **three** other vacancies due to changes in membership during the year – one for a 1-year term and two for 2-year term. (May be more if others want to step down ahead of their appointed term). It's important that we have representatives from across all our congregations.

For PCC Nomination Forms please visit [Nomination of PCC Member](#).

## What is the Deanery Synod?

A deanery is a group of Church of England parishes. We are part of the Bracknell Deanery, which covers all of Bracknell and Ascot and some of the areas around.

The Deanery Synod is made up of representatives from every parish in the deanery and meets 3-4 times a year. We are the biggest parish in the deanery and have seven lay representatives on the Deanery Synod as well as the clergy.

## What does a Deanery Synod do?

The Synod helps parishes to work in partnership in mission to the area covered by the deanery and considers matters of common interest. It also plays a key role in deciding how the Parish Share (the money paid to the Diocese to cover costs such as clergy stipends, housing and training) is divided between parishes.

## Election to the Deanery Synod

Synod members are elected every 3 years for a 3-year term and serve on the PCC. Following last year's elections, we currently have 1 vacancy. You may stand for election and, if successful, will serve for the remaining 2 years of the current 3-year term.

There is **one Deanery Synod place** to be filled at this year's APCM.

For Deanery Synod Nomination Forms please visit [Nomination of Deanery Synod Member](#).

## Deanery Synod Meetings

Deanery Synod meetings are held three or four times per year on a Tuesday evening at various locations in the Deanery or online.

Deanery Synod members are also automatically members of the PCC, and so attend those meetings as well.

## **Parishes within the Deanery**

- Ascot Heath – All Saints Church and Chapel of St Mary and St John
- Binfield – All Saints and St Mark's Churches
- Bracknell – Holy Trinity Church and Mosaic
- Easthampstead – St Michael and St Mary Magdalene Church, The Church at the Pines, and St Francis and St Clare
- Sunningdale – Holy Trinity Church
- Sunninghill and South Ascot – St Michael and All Angels and All Souls Churches
- Warfield – St Michael the Archangel and St Andrew's Churches and two school based congregations
- Winkfield, Cranbourne and Chavey Down – St Mary's, St Peter's and St Martin's Churches

## **Safeguarding**

All members of the PCC and Deanery Synod must complete safeguarding training and a DBS check (for vulnerable adults and children).

## **Further information**

For further information about the PCC or the Deanery Synod please get in touch with :

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