

Briefing Note

An Instrument has been made by the Bishop in light of the continuing national situation relating to Coronavirus (Covid 19).

The Instrument is made under the Bishop's powers contained in Section 10 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 and Rule 78 of the Church Representation Rules 2020.

For 2020 the time for holding a meeting of parishioners to choose churchwardens has been extended until 31st October (instead of 31st May). Similarly, the period for holding an annual parochial church meeting (APCM) is extended to 31st October.

The APCM may now be held by using Zoom or other virtual means instead of a physical meeting.

Churchwardens who were chosen in 2019 continue to hold office until 31st January 2021 unless their successors are admitted to office before that date.

If a churchwarden is serving a sixth successive period of office that sixth successive period is extended so that disqualification under Section 3 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 arises only at the end of the extended period.

The annual meeting to elect new churchwardens may also now be held by using zoom or other virtual means instead of a physical meeting.

The term of office of representatives of the laity on PCCs is also extended. A representative of the laity whose term of office was due to expire this year will expire and where the APCM is deferred under the provisions of the Bishop's earlier Instrument dated 19th March 2020 the representative's term of office will expire only at the end of the deferred APCM.

If, a parish has already held its annual meeting of parishioners and APCM for 2020 the effect of the Bishop's Instrument of 19th March 2020 remains as follows:-

1. Churchwardens chosen in 2019 remain in office and the churchwardens chosen in 2020 will take up office when they are admitted to office (which could be as late as 31st January 2021).
2. Newly elected representatives of the laity on the PCC will already have taken up office immediately on conclusion of the 2020 APCM.

Those whose APCMs and annual meeting have not yet been held will need to note the following points when running an election at the meeting:

1. For the annual meeting to elect churchwardens, nominations will need to be submitted before the start of the meeting, so these may need to be invited in advance.

2. For the APCM, nominations for candidates to be elected to serve on the PCC may be submitted either before or at the meeting.
3. For a simple election, it may be possible to conduct this by a show of hands. However, for anything involving three or more candidates it may be necessary to prepare in advance to use the polling facility on Zoom. The names of known candidates are inserted into the system before the meeting and someone will need to be ready to add the names of other candidates duly nominated at the meeting itself.

APCMs held in 2020 should elect members of the laity to represent the parish at Deanery Synod for the next triennium.

PCC secretaries must give the Diocesan Electoral Registration Officer names and addresses (including e mail where provided) of every person elected to the Deanery Synod as a parochial representative of the laity as soon as possible after the APCM has taken place.