

Parish Guide to preparing for and running Annual Meetings

What are the annual meetings?

Before 31 May every year, Church of England parishes must hold their annual meetings. Technically the annual meeting is two meetings, usually held at the same time and place:

- A meeting of the parishioners, which elects churchwardens.
- The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), where the main business is to receive and discuss a report from the minister and PCC on the last year, to receive the PCC's annual accounts, and to elect people to the PCC and Deanery Synod.

Templates for the legal forms etc. required are available on www.parishresources.org.uk/pccs/apcms.

The Electoral Roll: revising or preparing a new roll before the meeting

Every parish has an electoral roll. People on it can vote at the APCM, and being on it for six months is one of the eligibility requirements for standing for election to the PCC or Deanery Synod. People can apply to join the roll throughout the year using [Form 1](#), which explains who is eligible. The roll is revised every year before the APCMs, except every six years (in 2025, 2031, etc.) when an entirely new roll must be prepared, and everyone who wishes to remain on the roll must reapply.

Process for revising the Electoral Roll:

- Notice that the roll will be revised must be given by displaying [Form 2](#) for 14 days before the revision begins, on or near the main door of each church in the parish, and in other buildings licensed for public worship.
- The revision must be completed between 15 and 28 days before the APCM.
- Revising the roll means:
 - o Reviewing names added to the roll in the last year, and adding names if necessary.
 - o Removing anyone who has died; been ordained; has asked to be removed in writing; or who was not eligible when they were added.
 - o People should also be removed if they do not currently live in the parish and have not habitually attended worship in the parish for six months or more, unless they were not able to because of illness or some other sufficient reason.
- The names on the revised roll must be published for 14 days before the APCM. No changes can be made during those 14 days, except to correct errors or add someone who turns 16.

Process for preparing a new Electoral Roll (in 2025, 2031, etc.):

- Notice that a new roll will be prepared must be given by displaying [Form 3](#), for at least 14 days starting 2 months before the APCM, with announcements made at every Sunday service during those 14 days (or the first Sunday afterwards if there are none).
- Everyone who wishes to remain on the roll will need to reapply to join. The PCC must take reasonable steps to let everyone currently on the roll know this, unless they would have been removed if the roll was being revised.
- Applications to join the new roll can be made once the notice is up. Preparation of the new roll must be completed between 15 and 28 days before the APCM.
- The names on the new roll must be published for 14 days before the APCM. No changes can be made during those 14 days, except to correct errors or add someone who turns 16.

Preparing for the meetings – notices and reports

A timetable of the key dates leading up to the annual meetings is on page 5.

Parishes need to give notice that the annual meetings will be held and produce several reports. The report which takes the most work to produce is the Financial Statements, and it is a good idea to check the dates of the APCM and the PCC with the treasurer, to make sure they have enough time.

Giving notice

Two documents, the [Notice of the meeting of parishioners](#) and [Form M1: Notice of the APCM](#), must be signed by the minister and displayed on or near the main door of the church for at least the two Sundays before the APCM.

Reports

A number of reports must be provided to the APCM, with time for discussion if people wish to. These can be combined into a single document or presented separately.

Annual report of the PCC

This report should be “on the proceedings of the parochial church council and the activities of the parish generally”. This report must state whether the PCC has complied with its legal duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops’ guidance on safeguarding vulnerable children and adults (under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016).

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Producing the report and financial statements of the PCC each year and arranging for them to be independently examined (or audited) is one of the major responsibilities of the PCC treasurer. Once approved by the PCC, they should be signed by the PCC’s chair.

The signed report and financial statements should be published for 7 days before the APCM.

Electoral Roll report

This report is on changes to the Electoral Roll since the last APCM. Usually this is simply the numbers of people added and removed, and the total number of people on the Roll. The list of names on the Roll must be available for inspection at the meeting.

Fabric report

The churchwardens are responsible for producing this report which should cover any actions taken or proposed to protect or maintain the church building or articles, particularly anything recommended after a Quinquennial Inspection. The report must be approved by the PCC, who can amend it, before the APCM.

Deanery Synod report

This report summarises the work of the Deanery Synod during the year.

Holding the meetings

An example agenda is at the end of this guide.

Meeting of Parishioners

The meeting of the parishioners usually takes place first. Anyone on the electoral roll of the parish, or who lives in the parish and is on the local government register of electors, can propose or second candidates and can vote. The Chair is the minister or, in their absence, someone chosen by the meeting. The meeting should be minuted, by someone other than the chair.

Election of Churchwardens

This is the main business of this meeting. To be eligible, candidates must be baptised and must be on the Electoral Roll of the parish, twenty-one years old or older and be actual communicants (have received communion three times in the last year and are confirmed or “ready and desirous” of being confirmed). There are also several disqualifying criteria, which are explained on [the nomination form](#). No one is allowed to be a churchwarden in more than one parish, or for more than six years consecutively unless the meeting decides that this rule should not apply in the parish.

[Nomination forms](#) must be given to the minister before the start of the meeting. If there are not more candidates than there are places, (e.g. one or two people stand for two places) the candidates are elected automatically and there is no vote. If there are more candidates than places a vote must take place, either by ballot or a show of hands.

Churchwardens are elected for one year at a time. Elected candidates do not become churchwardens until they have made a declaration of eligibility and willingness to serve and are admitted to the office, usually at an Archdeacon’s Visitation (although churchwardens-elect are members of the PCC immediately). Outgoing churchwardens continue until their replacement is admitted, or if no one is elected in their place, until 31 July.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The Chair of the APCM is the minister. In their absence or if they decide not to chair, the vice chair of the PCC should chair, or someone chosen by the APCM. The PCC Secretary or someone else chosen by the APCM should take minutes.

The business of the APCM is:

- To receive the following reports, which may be discussed:
 - o The report on the Electoral Roll
 - o The annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the parish generally
 - o The financial statements of the PCC for the previous calendar year
 - o The annual fabric report
 - o A report of the proceedings of the deanery synod.
- To elect or appoint the following people in the following order:
 - o Elect members of the Deanery Synod (every third year, or when there is a casual vacancy)
 - o Elect members of the PCC
 - o Appoint an independent examiner (or auditor) for the PCC until the next APCM.

Rules for the election of Deanery Synod and PCC members

Lay Deanery Synod members are elected for three-year terms, and the elections are due in 2026 and then every third year. Some PCC members are elected every year, usually for three-year terms, with one third of the elected members being elected each year (although APCMs can pass a resolution to elect PCC members for one-year terms in future). If a place for a Deanery Synod representative or PCC member is vacant part-way through a term, the APCM can elect someone to fill the place for the remainder of the original term of office. If the APCM will not be held within two months, the PCC can elect people to fill casual vacancies instead.

Nomination forms for [PCC members](#) and for [Deanery Synod members](#) are available on www.parishresources.org.uk. To be eligible, candidates must be at least 16 years old, have been on the Electoral Roll for at least 6 months (unless they are under 18 years old), be an actual communicant, and must not be disqualified (see the [notice of the APCM](#) for details of disqualification). They must be proposed and seconded by people on the Electoral Roll, before the APCM using the forms or during it verbally. Anyone elected who did not sign the nomination form must do so afterwards as part of the declaration of eligibility.

Voting can either be done using ballot papers or by a show of hands. Anyone on the Electoral Roll can attend and vote for as many candidates as there are places, but cannot vote more than once for any candidate. Draws are decided by the chair casting lots. If there are not more candidates than places they are declared to be elected without a vote, unless the APCM passes a resolution to vote on each candidate individually. An APCM can decide to allow STV or postal voting, from the next year's APCM.

Appointment of an independent examiner of the PCC's report and financial statements

It is common for the PCC to propose an independent examiner for the APCM to approve. Independent examiners or auditors must not be members or close connections of the PCC and should be competent to do the work. More information on the role is online here: www.parishresources.org.uk.

After the meetings

Newly elected members of the PCC and Deanery Synod must sign the [declarations of eligibility to be a charity trustee](#) and give them, and the signed nomination form, to the Chair of the APCM. They cannot act in their new role until they have done so, and if they fail to after being given a reasonable chance, the Chair must declare their seat vacant.

After the annual meetings, the Diocesan Office will contact you to ask you to confirm or update the details of your church officers, for the number of people on your electoral roll, and for copies of the PCC's annual report and financial statements. The results of elections at the APCM must also be published on or near the main door of every church in the parish for at least 14 days.

For more information

The law governing the meetings, reports and elections above is:

- The Churchwardens Measure 2001, which contains the rules for a meeting of the parishioners and the election of churchwardens. See: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2001/1/contents
- The Church Representation Rules, which include the rules for APCMs, as well as parish Electoral Rolls and the membership of and elections to PCCs and Synods. See: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/church-representation-rules>

Sample agenda for a parish's annual meetings

St Mary's Church: Agenda for the meeting of the parishioners to elect churchwardens and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

To be held in St Mary's Church at 3pm on Sunday 24 May 2020.

Meeting to elect churchwardens

- 1) **Opening prayers and welcome from the Vicar***
Revd Lara
- 2) **Minutes of the last meeting**
To approve the minutes of the meeting on 21 April 2019.
- 3) **Election of Churchwardens**
To elect two churchwardens.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

- 1) **Minutes of the last meeting**
To approve the minutes of the meeting on 21 April 2019.
- 2) **Reports**
The person giving the report will either present it, or simply take questions if appropriate.
 - a. **Vicar's report: 2020 vision***
Revd Lara, Vicar
 - b. **St Mary's Church and PCC in 2019**
Courtney Walsh, Vice Chair of the PCC
 - c. **Electoral Roll changes**
Viv Richards, Electoral Roll Officer
 - d. **Fabric Report**
Clive Lloyd, Churchwarden
 - e. **Deanery Synod in 2019**
Chris Gayle, Deanery Synod member
 - f. **Finance report**
Garfield Sobers, PCC Treasurer
- 3) **Elections and appointments**
 - a. Election of 3 Deanery Synod members **
 - b. Election of 3 PCC members
 - c. Appointment of the Independent Examiner

* These items may not be required. *Items in italics are optional and can be moved as appropriate.*

** Deanery Synod elections are due in 2020 and then every third year. Elections to fill casual vacancies can take place in other years.

Timetable for the annual meetings

Step	Time range	Date chosen
In 2025, 2031 and every sixth year: Give notice of preparation of a new roll, by putting up the notice and announcements at all Sunday services. Make reasonable effort to let everyone on the roll know that they will need to re-apply to remain on (except for those who would be removed in a normal year).	At least 2 months before the APCM, for 14 days	*
In any other year: Give notice of revision of the roll, by putting up the notice and announcements at all Sunday services	For 14 days, ending between 15 and 28 days before the APCM	*
Complete preparation of a new roll/ revision of the roll	Must be completed between 15 and 28 days before the APCM & after the 14-day notice period.	*
Put up the two notices that the APCM and the meeting of the parishioners will be held	For at least the two Sundays before the APCM	*
Display the new or revised Electoral Roll. No changes can be made until after the APCM, except to correct errors and add people who turn 16 having applied already.	For the 14 days before the APCM	*
PCC meeting to approve APCM reports and the Annual Report and Financial Statements	More than 7 days before APCM	
Publish the PCC's approved financial statements	For the 7 days before the APCM	
APCM and meeting of the parishioners	Between 1 January and 31 May	
Display the results of election	14 days after the APCM	
Signed declarations of eligibility (nomination form and eligibility to be a trustee & fit and proper person) to be received by Chair of APCM from PCC and Deanery Synod members.	A reasonable time must be allowed for this, after which the place is vacated.	
Send the Diocesan Office: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number on the Electoral Roll - A copy of the Financial statements - Details of new deanery synod members and parish officers 	By 1 July Within 28 days of the APCM As soon as practical	

* These dates will can be calculated for you by this online tool (select either revision or preparation of a new roll first):

<https://portal.southwark.anglican.org/places/utilities/ApcmTimetable2>