

## APCM Sessions: FAQs

*(Questions from the 'chat' at all three forums shown in italics)*

### **Churchwardens:**

1. *How many years can a churchwarden stand for without a break?  
Is the maximum number of years for churchwardens to be in office absolute. or flexible?  
The Church Representation Rules state that 6 years continuous service is maximum term for a churchwarden, before the person is required to stand down for at least 1 year. An Annual Meeting can dispense with this rule, but it only becomes effective from the next annual meeting (i.e. decision at 2021 annual meeting becomes effective from 2022 meeting).*
2. *If APCM dispenses with 6 year rule for CWs, does that stand in perpetuity or does it have to be renewed at regular intervals.*  
This dispensation remains in place until a future annual meeting changes the rule.
3. *can we have a single Churchwarden?*  
Every parish elects 2 churchwardens. If 1 or fewer less persons stands then there is a vacancy.
4. *If the current Churchwardens are prepared to carry on as Churchwardens do they have to be nominated and elected again this year.  
What if church wardens are not changing  
Only been elected as church warden October 2020, less than 6 months in the role. Would I need to be re-elected?  
Do we need to complete paperwork if current CWs are happy to stay on? In our case we have been in vacancy and the CWs would like to help new incumbent settle in.  
I am the only one to be likely to volunteer as warden, do we have to have written nominations?*  
The term of office for a churchwarden lasts from one annual meeting to the next, and only becomes effective legally once they are sworn in by the Archdeacon, or the person that responsibility is delegated to. Churchwardens have to be elected each year, irrespective of whether they are changing or not, and the full process of nomination and elected followed.
5. *For how long do we keep the papers?  
Can they (nomination forms) all be stored electronically rather than lots of paperwork and files taking up space?*  
Once elections held and people take up their roles formerly then the nomination forms can be destroyed. The forms can be stored electronically, subject to GDPR.
6. *If the swearing in is to be done in our churches - when do you recommend it is done?*  
The annual meeting itself, or a Sunday service, is a wonderful opportunity to publicly swear in the churchwardens and to pray for them in their ministry, but it can be done at any mutually agreeable time by the designated person.

## **Online Meetings:**

1. *Is it legal to hold the (annual) meetings by Zoom this year?*  
Yes Bishop Alan has signed an order to allow annual meetings online again this year.
2. *Do parishes have to offer online attendance at the APCM?*  
Online annual meetings do not have to be offered. However all reasonable efforts should be made to enable everyone to participate.
3. *I think I'm being dense but is simultaneous online and in church? that's what I can't visualize I can't visualise how you can have a meeting in person and online?*  
A meeting can be simultaneously both online and in person in the same way a service can be. Livestream from a church, church hall, or venue, enables people to watch proceedings. A zoom chatline, mobile phone link, email address, or similar link to a designated person at the meeting, allows those online to ask questions, vote, etc.
4. *If we did have an online annual meeting, what about people without internet access?*  
All efforts should be made to enable everyone to participate. Phone line to ring into a zoom meeting or a combined livestream/in person meeting (see above) are options. In the end if people are unable to attend in person, or unwilling to connect online, but all reasonable efforts have been made to enable this to happen, then it is the choice of the individual not to participate, in the same way if someone was unable to attend a physical meeting on the date agreed, or chose not to attend.
5. *Do you have a recommendation for how on-line participants may take part in a secret election?*  
You will need to consider how votes are to be taken and recorded. Votes at annual meetings are normally taken by show of hands, which will present few problems on a video platform. Anybody present may require a recorded vote by secret ballot, normally on signed papers: you will need to consider using text, chat or other functions for this purpose if you need to. Note that a recorded vote at annual parish meetings is not a secret ballot.
6. *Has anyone already got a protocol for electronic participation from last year?*  
The Diocesan Synod has a protocol which is attached to this document.

## **Special Circumstances:**

1. *Given the current circumstances, do the forms for CW and PCC need to be signed? Indeed, is email nomination allowed?*  
*Do electronic signatures count?*  
Email nomination, seconding and confirmation from the candidate are acceptable.

2. *With the current stay at home messages, does a notice have to be placed on the church door or is the current electronic communication channels we have in place suffice?*  
If possible a notice should be placed on the church door, or Lyche gate, or outside noticeboard, and clergy are allowed to visit their churches, and people can exercise, therefore this should be possible. Placing the notice on websites, weekly noticesheets, service sheets, etc is equally acceptable. The church needs to ensure that the meeting of parishioners is publicised beyond electoral roll members and publically, as well as by electronic ecommunication.
  
3. *Where should we publish the documents e.g. the electoral roll if we are not meeting in Church buildings at the time they need to be published?*  
Electronic display on website, a churchnearyou page, etc is acceptable. Please note that names only can be shown and no other personal details.
  
4. *If we have a mixed mode APCM with anonymous voting, how do we ensure that we don't have people not on the electoral roll voting?*  
This is difficult. Ask on electoral roll members to vote and should be possible to check who present is not on electoral roll. If voting very close then these people should be asked directly not to vote.
  
5. *From when can meetings happen in person under Covid restrictions?*  
Note should always be taken of the current legislation and guidelines in place at the time of the meeting. The current guidance, which continues to change over the coming weeks and months, states that charity trustee meetings should be held, if at all possible, online, but where necessary, if they cannot be delayed they can be held in person. Acts of worship, with elements of the meeting within them, are permitted. In all circumstances the necessary risk assessments should be done and suitable precautions taken, and the key is not to allow people to mingle before or after the meeting. Gradual release of lockdown over the coming weeks will make in-person meetings more and more possible, but must be conducted in covid-safe conditions.

## **Reports**

1. *Should PCC or vicar write the PCC report please*  
*Is it acceptable for Church Warden to compile Annual report rather than minister? I was not in the parish in 2020 so would struggle to write a report.*  
The Annual Report is the responsibility of the PCC and not any individual, and should be approved by the PCC. Obviously difficult to write by committee but different sections can be written by different people and then collated by PCC Secretary or another agreed person.
  
2. *I am sure I have not been doing the annual report correctly. Have only been sending an annual report on finance. What should I have been doing?*  
This is a useful link for guidance:

<https://www.parishresources.org.uk/resources-for-treasurers/accounting-and-reporting/the-annual-report/>

The Church Representation Rules says:

- M5 (1)** The PCC must provide the annual meeting with each of the following, which the annual meeting may then discuss –
- (a) a report on the changes to the roll since the last annual meeting or, in a year in which a new roll is prepared, a report on the numbers entered on the new roll,
  - (b) an annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish generally,
  - (c) the financial statements of the PCC for the year ending on the 31 December preceding the meeting,
  - (d) the annual fabric report under section 50 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018,
  - (e) a report of the proceedings of the deanery synod.
- (3) The annual report to be provided under paragraph (1)(b) must include a statement as to whether the PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).
- (4) The annual report to be provided under paragraph (1)(b) must be prepared in the form specified by the Business Committee.
- (5) The financial statements to be provided under paragraph (1)(c) –
- (a) must be prepared in the form specified by the Business Committee,
  - (b) must be independently examined or audited in the manner specified by the Business Committee.
- (6) If the PCC approves the financial statements that have been examined or audited under paragraph (5)(b), the chair of the meeting at which they are approved must sign them.

Other items are optional, but the annual report is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the life of the parish, and the pay tribute to many who work hard within the life of the church, and also promote new initiatives, the MAP, and more.

3. *Do the reports have to be provided in paper form or can people be directed where to find them online?*

Online certainly saves paper and is more environmentally friendly. They can be emailed to people who request them. Anyone who requests a hard copy should be provided with one.

4. *as this last year many of the usual reports our church would do will not be applicable this year, can we blanket cover things more in the vicars report as long as we include the essential reports - would this be acceptable*

The guidelines indicate what must be in the annual report – see above – and anything else is optional.

5. *We've been using the same format for our Annual Report for a while now. Is it possible to see some examples of really great ARs?!*

This is a useful link for guidance and ideas:

<https://www.parishresources.org.uk/resources-for-treasurers/accounting-and-reporting/the-annual-report/>

The Archdeacon of Hertford has a good example of an annual report which she shares with curates at IME. Other examples or request for examples could be directed to the relevant Archdeacon's office. We will endeavour to put examples on the diocesan website.

Parishresources.org.uk is a good resource here, and for other items:

<https://www.parishresources.org.uk/resources-for-treasurers/accounting-and-reporting/the-annual-report/>

### **Procedure:**

1. *We don't have a vicar - do nomination forms go to the churchwardens or to the curate? Can the Church Warden once appointed take over the Chairing of the meeting?*

Church Representation Rules M2(4) cover this in detail.

In a vacancy the annual meeting should nominate a chair for the meeting. It can be different chairs for the different meetings: meeting of parishioners and annual parochial church meeting. The chair must be proposed, seconded and agreed at the start of the meeting, and should be a member of the PCC. It could be considered that a person standing for churchwarden have a conflict of interest at the meeting of parishioners, so an alternative chair for that meeting would be advisable. An elected churchwarden can become chair once elected, but only if agreed by the meeting. The chair of the meeting has to receive nomination forms prior to the meeting starting.

2. *How may we publicise notices? Results? Electronically?*

Notices, results etc should be published in as broad a way as possible; website, noticesheets, notices, etc. in both electronic and hard copy format.

3. *Who may vote for PCC members? Those on the electoral roll only?*

Voting at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting should only be from people whose names are on the electoral roll.

This differs from voting at meeting of parishioners, for churchwardens, where anyone who lives in the parish plus those who are on the electoral roll can vote.

4. *I missed the start of the meeting, is there an updated version of Church Representation Rules and where can we get them?*

Copies of CRR2020 are available in hard copy from Church House publishing or

online on church of England website.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/church-representation-rules>

5. *What is the 1 page financial return that has to be uploaded to the diocesan portal within 28 days of the APCM*

Details of this and the form can be found at

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/finance/annual-returns-finance/>

6. *You only get one vote per computer on Zoom poll - we have 2 couples on our PCC and we discovered that they couldn't both vote, as they had logged in on one machine. We would be even more likely to have couples at an APCM.*

If couple can log in on two devices then they can have separate votes. If not votes can be sent via text or email to a designated phone number or email address and added to the vote.

7. *In practice do you actually tend to have people come to the AMP and not to the APCM? I mean that who aren't on the church electoral roll but are qualified to come to the AMP?*

It is very rare to have anyone who does not attend church regularly coming to the annual meeting, but sometimes church members come who are not on the electoral roll, and if they live in the parish they can vote for the churchwardens, but not at the APCM.

8. *We historically call our parishioners meeting the Annual Vestry Meeting. Is that correct or not?*

It was formerly called the vestry meeting, but the name was changed a number of years ago to 'annual meeting of parishioners.'

9. *Is it correct that Sidesmen are no longer elected at APCM, but at a PCC*

It is not necessary to elect sidepeople, deputy wardens, etc at the APCM, this is PCC business.

10. *What should happen if the financial statements are not available for circulation 7 days beforehand?*

Where possible the financial statement should be approved by the external independent examiner and PCC prior to the meeting and presented at the annual meeting. The PCC are responsible for ensuring this financial statement is prepared and ready. If the statement is not examined or 'fully ready' then it should be presented in the annual report and labelled 'draft – not examined'. If presented in draft format, or not prepared at all, then the rest of the meeting is conducted and then the meeting is adjourned. The meeting is subsequently reconvened as soon as practically possible at a future date, following due notice and procedure once more, to present the financial statement. If the meeting is not held in the allocated time this is a serious incident and needs reporting to the charity commission, assuming the parish is a registered charity, and the Archdeacon notified. In some

circumstances parishes can seek an extension from the Diocesan Bishop.

11. *Is there any guidance as to which PCC members should give which reports in the APCM?*

There is not determination of who should give the reports that are required at the annual meeting, however usually the relevant officer gives the relevant report: finance – treasurer, safeguarding – parish safeguarding officer, terrier and inventory – churchwarden, electoral roll – electoral roll officer, etc. This is not necessary but affirms the person carrying out the task and also means they can answer relevant questions, the reports can be given from the chair.

12. *Can certificate of election be scanned and emailed to Archdeacons office or is an original signed copy required?*

Electronic copies are preferred, but postal copies fine if necessary. If electronic copy sent no need to post original.

13. *Do we need a GDPR statement?*

All forms and information should be GDPR compliant, and forms distributed have a GDPR statement on them. It's not a requirement to make a statement in the meeting or in the annual report.

14. *Notice of APCM - Is the Minister the only person allowed to sign the Notice?*

Yes the minister should sign the notice. In a vacancy it should be lay vice-chair of the PCC.

15. *In the 25 years I have been at St ??, the last 10 as Secretary, we have received the Electoral Roll report in the Meeting of Parishioners rather than the APCM itself. Should we change this?*

Yes electoral roll report is part of the APCM and not meeting of parishioners.

16. *PCC elections are a nightmare for an electronic meeting because someone can be nominated on the night. Could we have a cut off for nominations to be made in advance? Usually elections are not needed anyway.*

*For nomination can you ask at the start of the meeting for any elections so you have everyone's name by the relevant time*

Anyone can be nominated in writing up to the start of the meeting for office of churchwarden and up to the moment of election for PCC, deanery synod, etc, and therefore there can be no cut-off prior to the meeting. The meeting may need to pause, or subsequent agenda items considered, before voting to enable any officers to prepare voting slips or whatever else needs to be done, to ensure the matter is dealt with appropriately.

17. *Would it be appropriate to make the APCM a social gathering as well?*

Yes very much so – see comments under 'other' below.

18. *Do the minutes from the apcm have to be kept until they are signed the following year before they can be distributed?*

They should be displayed and distributed in draft form, before approval the following year.

## ***Teams/Groups***

*Presumably all rules apply to annual district church meetings*

*Could you briefly mention team parish situation. thank you*

*Do the Church Rep Rules apply directly to DCC's or are they best practice?*

If a Team of churches is one legal parish, rather than several different parishes in one Team, then the rules and notice periods apply to the Annual Meeting of Parishoners and the APCM of the PCC. DCCs are not the legal body for the parish or the charity. Therefore, Church Rep Rules are good practice rather than applying directly. This impacts on things like the Electoral Roll revision. The notice period and subsequent closure etc has to be in line with the timing of the APCM, rather than DCCs AGMs. As the legal structure of teams and groups vary slightly it is useful to check with the Team Scheme, and if in doubt it is always checking on your local situation with your Archdeacon or Diocesan Pastoral and Advisory Secretary.

## **Electoral Roll**

1. *Understood that number on Electoral Roll had no bearing on Parish Share.*

The electoral roll does have a small impact on the parish share. The full calculation is shown on the diocesan website:

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/finance/parish-share-scheme/>

In summary the parish share is made up of two parts: stipend and mission support contributions. The stipend contribution is the direct cost of your parish priest; 100% if you have your own priest or the percentage share agreed across the benefice if you share a priest. The mission contribution is a calculation based on usual Sunday attendance and electoral roll, averaged over 3 years, and the share factor (based on 'affluence' of parish), and the number of shares allocated to a parish.

2. *Can you confirm whether we are doing a complete revision of the Electoral Roll?*

2021 is an annual revision year and not a complete renewal of electoral roll. A new roll is prepared every 6<sup>th</sup> year and the next is due in 2025.

3. *What information needs to go on a publicly displayed copy of the electoral roll?*

*Are we allowed to publish names or just the numbers for the electoral roll. Thinking of GDPR Should publish names only, and not other contact details (address, phone etc).*

4. *What exactly does revision of electoral entail?*

Every six years the old electoral roll is deleted and a completely new roll is arranged. In the in between years the roll is simply advertised in the weeks leading up to the

annual meetings, and then 'closed' for new additions and published 14 days prior to the annual meeting. Rule 4(1) of the Church Representation rules sets out the sort of revisions that should be made, e.g. where someone has died, or asked for their name to be removed. There are forms in the Church Representation Rules to use for revisions of electoral roll.

5. *Is there a reason the application form for the Electoral Roll does not include a request for the phone number?*

The CofE form has to be used for the electoral roll and telephone numbers are not required information to be on electoral roll, although email is requested, as an option.

6. *How long should the revision of the electoral roll be (i.e the time period in between the 2 14 day notice periods)?*

It can be as long as considered appropriate prior to the meeting, but the roll should be closed 14 days prior to the annual meeting and no new additions allowed. It can be 'reopened' immediately after the annual meeting.

7. *If someone has been on zoom for six months regular can they go on the roll*

Yes under current circumstances this can be considered 'regular attendance' at the discretion of the incumbent.

### **Online PCC Meetings:**

#### Note from Registrar:

Parochial church councils can, if they wish, meet using virtual means such as Skype or Zoom which enable the members to see and hear each other.

However, care must be taken so that members of a PCC who are unable to participate in a meeting in that way are not excluded from the PCC's deliberations and decision making. The Chair should take steps to ensure that they are able to participate so far as possible, including where necessary by means of the procedure for conducting business by correspondence set out in rule M29 of the Church Representation Rules.

The lawyers recommend that following a virtual meeting, decisions such as the authorising of expenditure, entering into contracts or those that require a formal resolution of the PCC are put in written form and circulated for formal approval under the correspondence procedure in rule M29, which under Rule 76 can be conducted by email

This can be done by circulating the minutes or a list of resolutions. What is more important is making clear whether the process under M29 of the Church Representation rules is being undertaken. As a reminder, to use M29 the chair must specify the deadline and level of support needed, and the secretary must report back at the next meeting. See here for the details you need to

follow: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/church-representation-rules/church-representation-rules-online-part-9>

1. Are minutes sufficient correspondence to confirm the business of an on line PCC meeting? If not, how would you suggest it is done in practice please?

What does "confirm" the business of the PCC after an electronic meeting mean? Would issuing the Minutes count?

Trying to avoid extra work for the PCC secretary, can we not send out the Minutes by email and ask members to confirm their agreement.

will the minutes be for the purpose of correspondence after PCC meetings be sufficient

Yes, as indicated by the registrar above. An email of 'draft/unapproved' minutes, to be confirmed at the next PCC meeting, can be circulated.

2. Can we hold our S.11 Meeting over ZOOM?

Yes all PCC meetings can be held online, including section 11.

3. Could you explain again about voting at pcc on zoom

Voting can simply be by a show of hands. Voting can be via the 'voting option' on zoom and other online meetings, or by members emailing or texting a specific number or email address, and those votes counted by PCC Secretary or other nominated person.

4. Where do I find the rules for online PCC meetings?

The note from the registrar refers to M29 above. References to online meetings are limited in the church representation rules as online meetings are relatively new. If there are specific questions around a specific aspect of online meeting please ask.

### **Readers & PTO Clergy**

1. Can you please expand on whether Licensed Readers are ex - Officio or take up a place on the PCC?

The annual meeting decides on how many of the licensed Readers to the parish should be on the PCC. The names of the readers should be on the electoral roll of the parish. The Readers are additional places on the PCC.

2. What about PTO clergy - do we need an APCM resolution for their membership of PCCs? Only clergy licensed to the parish are ex-officio members of the PCC, and this would not normally include PTO clergy. PCC can co-opt members up to the equivalent of one fifth of the elected lay members of a PCC, but with a maximum of two, to the PCC, and could choose to include PTO in this figure. The number of clergy members on a PCC should not exceed the number of lay members.

### **Other:**

Other comments raised in the meetings 'chat' included:

1. *Our deanery is talking doing a WhatsApp group*  
Co-operation across the deanery for PCC Secretaries, churchwardens etc is a good way of providing mutual support and information flow.
  
2. *Last year our APCM followed the morning service, and was in person and Zoom. We had a better attendance using both platforms.*  
*We make it part of our main sunday service*  
*We normally hold it after coffee on Sunday*  
*We always finish with a parish lunch*  
*We have a video of slides from the past year then put it on the website for others to watch afterwards*  
*We hold a lunch after the Sunday Morning service followed by the APCM*  
*We hold our meetings after a service...last year it was after evensong*  
We encourage parishes to hold annual meetings in the context of worship, as part of or before/after services, to be creatives with how information is presented, and see the annual meetings not as something to be 'endured', or to get through as painlessly as possible, but an opportunity to thank God for the life of the church, to thank people involved, to launch a new initiative/MAP/activity, to speak of the good things happening in the life of the church, and to make it a social event with maximum amount of people present.
  
3. *At a difficult APCM I had a copy of the rules in view so that people could see that this was being held by the rules*  
A copy of the Church Representation Rules, either online or hard copy, essential for all clergy and PCC secretaries.
  
4. *Our reports are made into booklet form by the secretary and the benefice clerk.*  
While there are legal and essential items that need to go into the report, it also gives parishes the opportunity to highlight the many good things they are doing, and presenting this in an attractive form (either the full report or a summary), that can be given to visitors or new members of the church, helps to promote the life of the church.