PARISH MEETINGS (ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION AND PUBLICITY)  
AND ADMISSION OF CHURCHWARDENS INSTRUMENT 2020

The Bishop of St Albans, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 10 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 and rule 78 of the Church Representation Rules, makes the following provision:

Application

1. The provision made by this instrument applies to each parish in the diocese of St Albans.

2. The provision made by paragraphs 5 to 9 below applies in respect of meetings of parishioners and APCMs held between the date of this instrument and 31 October 2020.

Interpretation

3. In this instrument:

   a. “meeting of parishioners” means the meeting required to be held by section 5 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 for the purpose of choosing churchwardens;

   b. “APCM” means the annual parochial church meeting required to be held by rule M1 of the Church Representation Rules;

   c. “convenor” means the minister of the parish but if there is no minister or the minister is unable or unwilling to act the convenor shall be:

      i. for the purpose of the meeting of parishioners, the churchwardens of the parish; and

      ii. for the purpose of the APCM, the vice-chair of the parochial church council (PCC) or if he or she is unable or unwilling to act, the secretary of the PCC or some other person appointed by the PCC;

   d. “electronic means” means electronic means of communication which allow the person to hear and be heard by other persons participating in the meeting and, where practicable, to see and be seen by those other persons; and

   e. “minister”, in relation to a parish, has the same meaning as in rule 83 of the Church Representation Rules.

Date by which parish meetings must be held

4. My instrument of 19 March 2020 remains in effect. Among other things, that instrument provided that the date by which meetings of parishioners and APCMs must be held is 31 October 2020.

Electronic participation in meetings

5. When giving notice of a meeting of parishioners or APCM, the convenor of the meeting may state in that notice that persons eligible to attend the meeting may attend the meeting by electronic means.
6. If the convenor of a meeting decides to permit attendance by electronic means:
   a. the notice of the meeting shall set out full details of how a person may participate in the meeting, or provide a link to a website on which such details are set out;
   b. the notice of the meeting shall set out whether persons attending the meeting by electronic means may vote at the meeting;
   c. if the meeting is a meeting of parishioners, the notice of the meeting shall set out how nominations of candidates for the office of churchwarden may be sent to the minister prior to the commencement of the meeting by those not physically present with the minister;
   d. the mechanisms by which those attending the meeting by electronic means are to be called to speak or, if relevant, have their votes recorded shall be determined by the chairperson of the meeting;
   e. any reference in the Churchwardens Measure 2001 or the Church Representation Rules to a “meeting” includes a meeting at which persons may attend by electronic means, and concepts such as the “place” of a meeting or whether a person is “present” at that meeting shall be interpreted accordingly; and
   f. form M1 may be amended to give effect to any requirement of this instrument.

7. It is for the convenor of the meeting to determine whether that meeting should be held:
   a. solely by electronic means;
   b. solely by physical attendance; or
   c. with the option of electronic means or physical attendance,

but subject always to any legal requirement from time to time regulating gatherings of persons or the use of buildings.

Publicity for meetings during closures of church buildings

8. If the convenor of a meeting considers that closures or restrictions affecting a church or licensed building by reason of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to have a significant effect on the ability of persons to receive notice of the meeting, the convenor shall consider what reasonable additional steps might be taken to publicise the meeting and in particular shall, wherever practicable, arrange for notice of the meeting to be given on the website of the parish or on the parish’s entry on achurchnearyou.com.

Consultation with PCC

9. In deciding how to carry out his or her functions under this instrument, the convenor of a meeting shall, wherever practicable, first consult with the parochial church council or its standing committee.

Admission of churchwardens

10. The minister of each parish in the diocese of St Albans is appointed as my substitute for the purpose of the admission to office of persons chosen in 2020 for the office of churchwarden for that parish.
11. If a parish has no minister, or if the minister is unable to act, the rural or area dean of the deanery in which the parish is situated is appointed as my substitute for the purpose of the admission to office of persons chosen in 2020 for the office of churchwarden for that parish.

12. In addition to the appointments above, each archdeacon is appointed as my substitute for the admission to office of persons chosen in 2020 for the office of churchwarden for a parish situated within the archdeacon’s archdeaconry or, by agreement with the relevant archdeacon, for a parish situated within that other archdeacon’s archdeaconry.

13. The appointments made by paragraphs 10 to 12 shall not affect my power to appoint further substitutes or the continuing appointment of any person previously appointed as my substitute.

14. For the purpose of section 6(1) of the Churchwardens Measure 2011, my substitutes may, by providing reasonable notice to the persons chosen for the office of churchwardens, appoint:

a. a date as the date of admission, which should be as soon as reasonably practicable after the meeting of parishioners at which those persons were chosen and in any event must be no later than 31 January 2021; and

b. a place within the deanery in which the parish is situated as the place of admission (or, if an archdeacon acts as my substitute, a place within the diocese of St Albans).

Signature

[Signature]

The Rt Revd Alan Smith
Bishop of St Albans

Date: 6th August 2020