

## **Annual Meeting of Parishioners, APCMs and the election and admission of Churchwardens**

I am pleased to let you know that in the light of revised guidance about the holding of virtual meetings, the Bishop has now signed an instrument (attached) which enables the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and APCMs for 2020, to be held electronically, so that decisions taken at those meetings have the same force as if taken at a physical meeting.

The Bishop had previously signed a separate Instrument enabling the 2020 annual meetings which had not been held by the time of lockdown in March to be deferred until the autumn, with the deadline becoming 31 October. This deadline remains and meetings now need to be arranged before then if they were not held before 23 March.

Subject to any further Government or Church of England guidance nearer the time, any local restrictions, and a risk assessment for the proposed venue, it may be possible for the meeting to be held physically. However, if it becomes clear that it would not be safe or sensible to do so, the annual meetings for 2020 may now take place virtually. You may wish to set a date now but confirm nearer the time whether it will be a physical or virtual meeting (though bearing in mind the need for notices).

These meetings are still subject to the provisions of the Church Representation Rules : <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/church-representation-rules>

In particular, please note that the electoral roll has to be revised in advance of the meeting following the usual procedure and deadlines in the Rules; this needs to happen even if the electoral roll was revised in March but the APCM did not follow.

The rules for the convening of meetings and notices of meetings still apply. Please see the instrument below concerning electronic participation in meetings bearing in mind those entitled to attend each meeting and the business to be transacted.

**The APCM** is a meeting for all those on the church's electoral roll. The purpose of this meeting is to receive the reports referred to in [Church Representation Rules](#) rule M5 and to make the election and appointments referred to in CRR rule M6. It is suggested that you might wish to consider publishing the reports and proposals in advance, being clear about how the information can be accessed.

**The annual meeting of parishioners** is a meeting for all those on the church's electoral roll and all those resident in the parish whose names are on the civil electoral roll of the parish. The purpose of this meeting is to elect the churchwardens. The provisions concerning nomination in [section 4 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001](#) continue to apply and some thought will need to be given as to how the nomination paperwork can be co-ordinated in advance of the virtual meeting.

1. The new arrangements permit the meeting to take place in a virtual 'location' and for voting to take place electronically rather than 'in person'

2. The meeting must take place in a way which is inclusive (so far as is reasonably possible). Inevitably, this will mean that some may not be able to participate (for example, because they do not have access to internet or computer facilities), but it will may also enable some churches to include those who are shielding, or where numbers would need to be restricted in a physical meeting in order to comply with Government and Church of England guidance).
3. The platform for the meeting must be interactive such that those participating can at least hear and be heard (and preferably also see and be seen). It cannot simply be a video platform (such as YouTube) or a video with a 'comments' facility (such as Facebook).

### **Admission of Churchwardens**

To facilitate the timely admission of churchwardens, given the constraints on large gatherings which may prevent the usual visitations, the Bishop has appointed the minister of each parish as his substitute for the purpose of the admission in 2020.

If a parish has no minister, or if the minister is unable to act, the relevant rural or area dean, or archdeacon will act instead.

Details concerning these arrangements for the Admission of Churchwardens, following their election at the APM, will be circulated from the relevant Archdeacon's office, early next week.