



The Anglican Church of Australia
The Diocese of Ballarat

Parish Council Guide

2019

Responsibilities of a Parish Council

The Parish Council is the local management body for the parish and its property and is the principal forum for the discussion of all affairs which affect the life of the Parish.

The Parish Council has responsibility for:-

- a) The administration of offerings and other Church monies received by the parish (other than those monies under trust subject to investment with the Ballarat Diocesan Trustees).
- b) Prioritising the payment for the monthly cost of its licensed clergy to the Diocesan Corporation.
- c) Payment from parish funds of all other financial obligations of the parish including other Diocesan requirements including parish assessment, cost of insurance or the Diocesan Ministry Pool.
- d) Ensuring the parish complies with State child safe legislation and Diocesan Safe Church policy and protocol including the timely reporting of all matters of alleged abuse.
- e) Managing any potential risks to the health and safety of parishioners, members of the public or contractors.
- f) Providing all things necessary for the celebration of Divine Worship and the administration of the Sacraments;
- g) Providing a suitable house for the use of the Cleric-in-Charge of the Parish in keeping with the Diocesan model rectory guidelines and ensuring that the said house and furnishings are maintained in good order and condition.
- h) Providing all repairs to Church property.
- i) The appointment, control and dismissal of all persons employed in or about the Church with the exception of ministry appointments under the responsibility of the cleric-in charge.
- j) In addition to the duties set out in the Parochial Government Act all other things necessary for the proper conduct of the affairs of the Parish or Parochial District.

Meetings of the Parish Council

Number of Meetings

1. Whilst there is no legislated minimum number of meetings it is suggested that there be not less than six meetings in a year.

Agenda

2. Each meeting's business should be set out in a formal Agenda which should be circulated along with the reports 48 hours prior to each meeting. An Agenda will typically comprise:
 - (a) An Opening including a welcome, prayer, an acknowledgement of country, confirmation of minutes and overview of the agenda
 - (b) A Report from the Cleric-in-Charge (preferably written, with suggestions for discussion)
 - (c) Reports from the Wardens and Treasurer noting any matters for Parish Council discussion
 - (d) Discussion on, and review of, Safe Church matters
 - (e) Corporate (collective) reflection on an issue relating to mission including a review of the Parish's mission plan
 - (f) Consideration of significant events and issues in parish life including reports from sub-committees and parish groups.

The Chair

3. The Cleric-in-Charge has the right to chair all meetings of the Parish Council unless the Bishop or their nominee attends the meeting and acts as the chair.

Others with the right to attend

4. Members of the Parish electoral roll (electors) may attend meetings of the Parish Council as observers but may only speak with the consent of the Parish Council.
5. Parish Synod representatives may attend and speak at Parish Council meetings but not vote.
6. Electors and Synod representatives attending a meeting of the Parish Council are expected to adhere to the same responsibilities as Councillors to maintain confidentiality and treat others with respect.
7. In limited circumstance for specified agenda items (e.g. matters of commercial or personal confidentiality) the Parish Council may need to exclude observers.

Responsibilities of a Parish Councillor

Parish councillors are expected to:

- Have read and understood the content of the Parochial Government Act, Diocesan Safe Church Policies and Faithfulness in Service (National Code of Conduct);
- Undertake Safe Ministry Training and hold a current Clearance for Ministry in accordance with Diocesan requirements
- Maintain confidentiality about all matters discussed in meetings
- Be honest and careful in their dealings at all times
- Ensure that the Parish keeps proper financial records and diligently manage all monies entrusted to it
- Act in the best interest of their parish, even if this may not be in their personal interest
- Not use information received to gain, directly or indirectly, any advantage for themselves or for any other Person associated with them
- Disclose any personal or professional interests that might conflict with their duty as a Parish Council Member
- Be privately frank and publicly supportive, by maintaining Parish Council solidarity on decisions made
- Treat each other with respect and dignity irrespective of ability, gender, sexuality, race, age or contribution to the church.

Supporting documents and recommended reading:

(Published on the Diocesan Webpage or available from the Diocesan office on request)

Parochial Government Act 1988-2018

Professional Standards Act 2010

Faithfulness in Service

Child safe policy

Parish Code of Conduct

Safe Church Policy

Electronic Communications Guideline

Privacy regulations (Policy)

Basic Requirements for Rectories

Memorial Gardens Policy

Suggested Acknowledgement of Country:

Our Parish acknowledges the [name] Tribe(s), the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our church(es) sit(s). We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across these lands.

General note and Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared to assist members of a Parish Council and summarise the main responsibilities as set out in the Acts of the Synod of the Diocese of Ballarat. Where any potential conflict arises between the Parish Council Guide and Diocesan Legislation then the requirements set out in the respective Act of the Synod will prevail.

Where a parish council or one of its members is considering a complex or legal matter then it is recommended that it is the legislation that guides the council / member.