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***Annual Letter to PCC Secretaries - 2018***  *13 March 2018*

Dear PCC Secretary

Welcome to those of you who are new to the role of PCC Secretary, and thank you all, newcomers and older hands, for shouldering this key role in the smooth running of the PCC and your parish.

This letter, as well as centring on APCMs (Annual Parochial Church Meetings) as usual, also mentions the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), and the 2018 Diocesan elections.

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Please share this letter with your parish priest and other church officers. Where appropriate please also pass on a copy to the secretaries of any district church council associated with your parish. Please do not hesitate to contact me on any of the above matters, on [monica.bolley@london.anglican.org](mailto:monica.bolley@london.anglican.org); tel. 020 7932 1228.

With kind regards, yours sincerely

*Monica*

Monica Bolley, Synodical Secretary

Copies emailed to:

The General Secretary, Diocesan Registrar,

Archdeacons, Incumbents and Priests-in-Charge, Area Deans,

Churchwardens, Treasurers, Parish Administrators, Electoral Roll Officers,

Deanery Lay Chairs, Deanery Synod Secretaries,

Area Directors of Training and Development, Area Finance Advisers and Area Office Staff.

Notes:

1 Note to PCC Secretaries:

In view of the increased use of email, and its benefits including the reduction in diocesan postage costs, this letter is now being sent by email to those PCC Secretaries for whom we have an email address. Those not on email are being sent copies by post.

2 Area /Archdeaconry offices

* London Archdeaconry: Pam Nicholls, [pam.nicholls@london.anglican.org](file:///\\lddata\ldf\Synod\Letters\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Word\pam.nicholls@london.anglican.org)
* Stepney Area: Sylvia Chance, [sylvia.chance@london.anglican.org](mailto:sylvia.chance@london.anglican.org)
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**1 APCMs**

Parishes are required to hold their APCMs by no later than 30 April in each year. Key items of business conducted at the APCM include presentations of the Annual Report on the proceedings of the PCC and activities of the parish, and of the Financial Statements of the PCC for the year ending 31 December. The meeting receives these, and are free to discuss them. Elections of lay representatives to the PCC are also held each year.

1. **APCM forms**

Appendix 1 of this letter lists documents that relate to the APCM, and which can be downloaded from the diocesan website.

Please note that the regulations surrounding **eligibility** to serve as a churchwarden, PCC or deanery synod member changed last year, following changes to the Church Representation Rules, (mainly due to Acts of Parliament concerned with Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups and Children and Young Persons).

**New versions of the APCM forms were produced** – 4in all, namely the Notice of the APCM, and nomination forms for the PCC, deanery synod and churchwarden elections, reflect these changes and should now be used, together with the revised *Form of Declaration that a person is not disqualified from being a PCC member. This should be signed by all PCC members who have not signed a nomination form which contains the declaration.*

*Provisions introduced last year, and noted in the ‘Declaration’ form, disqualify persons from acting as PCC treasurers or secretaries* ***even if they are not*** *members of the PCC).*

1. **Annual Reports on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish**

**Changes** reflected in the 2017 edition of the Church Representation Rules **now require parish annual reports to include a statement** as to whether the PCC has complied withthe duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, in relation to having due regard to House of Bishops’ guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

The House of Bishops has produced policy statements which can be found at this link:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding#na>

**(c) Electoral Roll - application forms**

Please note that the Electoral Roll form has been amended by a **removal** of the non-statutory ‘box’, which appears after the details of the main form. The removal of this ‘box’, in which additional information is requested, is due to the introduction of the **GDPR**.

**2 Electoral Rolls**

1. **Guide for the Revision of electoral rolls**

A sample schedule, based on a hypothetical APCM date of 22 April, showing the minimum periods in the revision timescale can be downloaded from the following link on the diocesan website: <http://www.london.anglican.org/kb/electoral-roll>.

1. **2019 – date for the Preparation of new electoral rolls**

2013 was the last year for the preparation of new church electoral rolls, which meant that everyone had to come off the roll and re-apply. This takes place only once in every six years. The next preparation of new rolls will be in **2019**.

In the intervening years, i.e. the years after 2013, and this year, the usual annual revision of the electoral rolls takes place.

**3 PCCs**

For information regarding the:

* Number of lay representatives on the PCC (i.e. the formula in force since 2004);
* Term of office of elected lay members of the PCC
* Declaration that a person is not disqualified from being a PCC Member

Please go to <http://www.london.anglican.org/support/annual-meetings/>

**4 Data Protection: The GDPR**

The Diocesan **‘GDPR Toolkit for Parishes’** and other resources, including the **PowerPoint slides and Questions & Answers from the GDPR Parish Workshops** are available on the following link: <https://www.london.anglican.org/kb/data-protection/>. A video of one of the Workshops will also be available via that link, in about a week’s time.

A suggestion for online GDPR training is ‘iHasco’: [**https://www.**ihasco**.co.uk/**](https://www.ihasco.co.uk/)**.**

Tel: 01344 867 088 and quote London Diocese ref: 1324. (The contact is Sue Webb).

As mentioned at the GDPR Parish Workshops, the APCM presents a good opportunity to draw attention to the parish’s Privacy Notice and to distribute Consent Forms.

**5 Diocesan Synod and Area Council Elections – in 2018**

Elections to the Diocesan Synod and Area Councils take place every 3 years, and elections are due to be held this year. The Houses of Laity of the deanery synods are the electors in these elections (they nominate candidates and then, if voting is required, vote for them). The lay people who can be nominated in these elections are those in the parishes. (In brief, candidates must be actual communicants, whose names are also entered on the electoral roll of a parish in the deanery, and who are at least 16 years of age.)

It is important that these bodies reflect the diversity of the church in London, and include amongst their membership BAME (Black, Asian, minority ethnic) members, and also young people from the churches, e.g. those who are under 35 years of age.

Please encourage those in your parish who can contribute to the governance bodies of the Diocese to come forward and stand for election. For more information, please consult the Diocesan website <https://www.london.anglican.org/>. or for questions and queries, please contact the Synodical Department: [monica.bolley@london.anglican.org](mailto:monica.bolley@london.anglican.org).

**6 Changes in Deanery Synod reps during the year**

Elections to deanery synods (for the new term – from 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2020) took place at last year’s APCMs. At the end of 2016, we sent you details of the number of representatives to be elected by your parish. This may have been different to the previous allocation: For the 2014-2017 term, it was 1 rep for every 57 on the electoral roll, or part thereof. For the 2017-2020 term, it is **1 rep for every 76**, or part thereof, on the electoral roll. The electoral roll figure used is the number as declared at the 2016 APCM. The number of representatives **remains the same** throughout the 3 year term.

It is important that the number of persons elected **must not exceed** the number of places allocated to the parish.

**The Diocese of London website – schedule on parish representatives**

A schedule containing the number of parish representatives on the deanery synod to which parishes are entitled, can be found on the diocesan website at <http://www.london.anglican.org/support/annual-meetings/>. You can consult this at any time throughout the 3 year deanery synod term.

It is possible that one or more of the representatives elected at the 2017 APCM might step down, or it may be that a place was not filled at the 2017 APCM election. If this is the case, a by-election should be held to fill the vacancy (or vacancies). Once the by-election has been held, please **email the details of the new reps to your Area/Archdeaconry office straight away** in order for the diocesan database to be updated.

It is important that the diocesan database records of the deanery synod memberships are kept accurate and up to date. The reasons for this include the use of these records:

- For the main elections, such as those to the Diocesan Synod and the Area Councils taking place this year;

- For by-elections to those bodies, or to the General Synod, **which can occur at any time;** or

- For use by the deanery synod secretaries, for circulating agendas and papers for deanery synod meetings.

**Your assistance in helping us to have accurate and up-to-date deanery synod membership records on the diocesan database would be very much appreciated.**

**7 After the APCM**

(a) **Parish Annual Returns - deadline: 31 May**

A Parish Annual Return is completed each year by every parish. It is the means of collecting information required by the bishops, archdeacons, diocesan officers, and the committees of the Archbishops’ Council, to assist in their various responsibilities for planning and administering the affairs of the Church at its different levels.

The Annual Return should be completed online as soon as possible after your APCM, and in any event, **must be completed by 31 May**. (Note that when completing the Return online, it need not be filled out in one sitting, but the different parts can be filled out at different times.)

The ‘Statistics on Mission and Finance’ provided through the Annual Returns are very useful in enabling changes in these areas to be identified over the years within parishes, deaneries, Areas and across the Diocese as a whole.

Parishes were asked to complete the ‘Statistics for Mission’ section of the Return by 31 January 2018*. (Please would you complete this section of the Return urgently, if this has not already been done.)* This section covers a range of subject areas including questions about the worshipping community; special services, such as weddings, and attendance data for Easter, October and Christmas.

(b) **Parish Annual Report and Accounts**

PCCs are governed by the Church Representation Rules, Rule 9 (4) of which states that, after the APCM, the PCC

*shall cause copies of the annual report and financial statements to be sent within twenty-eight days of the annual meeting to the secretary of the [London Diocesan Fund] for retention by the [Diocese]*

These are to be prepared as set out in **PCC Accountability - The Charities Act 2011 and the PCC.** The current 5th edition was published in February 2017 and issued free to all parishes via the Area Finance Advisers.

Failure to submit accounts before 1 June means that all members of the PCC are in breach of their duty as trustees. Failure to file may also affect the validity of the parish’s insurance policy.

**Online submission of accounts and report**

Parishes should submit their annual accounts and report online. They will need to certify electronically that the copies being sent in electronic form are an accurate copy of the accounts which have been approved by the PCC and signed by the chair presiding at the meeting. (Please note that the electronic certification will also constitute a declaration that the accounts have been signed off with an unqualified report by either the Independent Examiner or the Auditor).

**Registered Charities**

Parishes with income of over £100,000 must now be registered with the Charity Commission. Such PCCs must also submit their accounts and reports to the Charity Commission as well as to the Diocese. In addition to providing the Charity Commission with their annual report and accounts, they must also complete a ‘Charity Commission Annual Return’. The Charity Commission will e-mail a reminder to the nominated contact about this.

**Personal liability**

The PCC is a charity (whether registered or not) and all PCC members are classed as trustees. As trustees, the PCC’s members are not normally personally liable for the activities of the parish. However, as the Charity Commission’s website makes clear, if the trustees act imprudently, or are otherwise in breach of the law or the governing document, the position is different. Here, trustees may be personally responsible for liabilities incurred by the charity, or for making good any loss to the charity. Since trustees act collectively in running a charity, they will usually be collectively responsible to meet any such liability. Failing to keep proper records and accounts, to prepare annual statements or failing to submit accounts on time could well be considered to be an example of acting imprudently or in breach of law. A further impact of not filing accounts is that charity status could be withdrawn / suspended, and this would mean the PCC being unable to make Gift Aid claims, which would present a serious problem.

*Please draw this section of the letter to the attention of your PCC Treasurer.*

*Please contact your Area/Archdeaconry Office if you have any questions or queries relating to the matters raised in this section of the letter. This includes if you experience any difficulty with the online submission of the Parish Annual Return.*

**8 Churchwardens Measure 2001**

**Disqualification after six periods of office**

For information regarding the appointment of churchwardens to office after 6 years of serving, please go to: <http://www.london.anglican.org/support/annual-meetings/>

**9 Capital Vision 2020**

As we continue in our commitment to ‘Capital Vision 2020’, our vision for how, together as a Diocese, we serve Jesus Christ in London, please continue to use the opportunity which the APCM presents for prayer and reflection on your parish’s engagement with ‘Capital Vision 2020’, to be more ‘Confident’, ‘Compassionate’ and ‘Creative’.

If you would like any Capital Vision resources to share at your APCM please email [capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org](mailto:capitalvision2020@london.anglican.org).

**Appendix 1**

**Forms for Parish Annual Meetings**

The following documents can be located on the diocesan website at <http://www.london.anglican.org/support/annual-meetings/>

1. **Electoral Roll**

* Electoral Roll application form
* Electoral Roll certificate for display in church
* Notice of Revision of Electoral Roll
* Sample schedule for Revision of Electoral Roll

(b) **Other Forms relating to Parish Annual Meetings**

* Notice of Annual Parochial Church Meeting
* Notice of Meeting of Parishioners - for Election of Churchwarden
* Nomination Form for Election to the PCC
* Nomination Form for Election to the Deanery Synod
* Nomination Form for Election of Churchwardens
* Annual Parish Meeting results – Notice of results of elections for display

1. **Parish Representation on Deanery Synods – Schedule of Numbers**
2. **The Role of PCC Secretaries – copy of a presentation on the legalities and practicalities** can be located at: <http://www.london.anglican.org/kb/pcc-secretaries>

**Appendix 2**

**Publications for PCC secretaries**

(a) **Church Representation Rules 2017 (This replaces the previous blue 2011 edition).**

PCCs are governed by the Church Representation Rules. **All parishes should have a copy**. The Church Representation Rules 2017 (ISBN 9 780715 111062) are available electronically on the diocesan website at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis/church-representation-rules/church-representation-rules-online.aspx>

These Rules comprise Schedule 3 of the Synodical Government Measure 1969, together with subsequent amendments. They contain information including details on the governance of APCMs, PCCs, deanery synods, and other synodical bodies, and on the formation, maintenance, revision and renewal of Electoral Rolls.

(b) **Other useful publications**

* A Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors (Kenneth MacMorran and Timothy Briden) ISBN 0-819-28111-5
* Practical Church Management – A Guide for every Parish (James Behrens) ISBN 0-85244-602-0  (2nd edition)
* An ABC for the PCC – A Handbook for Church Council Members (John Pitchford) ISBN 0-8264-6599-4
* A Basic Church Dictionary and Compendium (Compiled by Tony Meakin) ISBN 1-85311-087-6
* Your Church and the Law (A simple explanation and guide) – David Parrott ISBN 978-1-85311-927-9

All of these publications are available from Church House Bookshop, 31 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN (tel: 020 7898 1300 / [www.chbookshop.co.uk](http://www.chbookshop.co.uk)).