

**ST. PAUL'S PASTORAL COUNCIL
REVISED CONSTITUTION NOVEMBER 2011**

1. THE PARISH

"The Church finds its immediate expression in the parish. It may lack resources. It may be widely scattered. It may be lost to sight in huge cities. Still the parish must be seen as the place where the mystery of the Church is made present. It is no mere geographical area, but a fellowship; the family of God". (Christifideles Laici, 26.)

The purpose of the Parish is to be, and become, the Body of Christ, gathered around the Eucharist, to worship God, and to be His presence in the world. Through the Church as it exists in the Diocese of Hallam, St. Pauls Parish operates in a given area, and has its own structures. It is served by its Parish Priest, its Deacon, a Finance Committee, and a Pastoral Council. Many other individuals and groups exist to help the spiritual, educational, social and material needs of its members, and those of the broader community.

The Parish Priest and Deacon are canonically appointed by the Bishop. The Finance Committee is selected in accordance with Canon Law from members of the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council is called into being by the Parish Priest, and acts according to its Constitution. Its overall purpose is to act with the Parish Priest, always respecting his final decision, in pursuance of the objectives of the whole parish, of the Deanery, and of the Diocese of which it is a part. It is therefore called upon to pray: to plan and execute decisions: to encourage active participation by all parishioners in the life of the parish in all its aspects; to develop new ventures and respond to new challenges.

The most important element in collaborative ministry is probably a shared vision of what the parish can be if all the members realise to the full their baptismal vocation and mission, both as individuals and as community. The decision to be more collaborative needs to be made by priests and people together.

2. The Parish Priest* shall have a duty to inform the Pastoral Council about important developments which may affect the life and structure of the Parish, and to discuss the implications of such developments, before reaching a final decision on their implementation.
3. The Pastoral Council will be concerned with the representation of the interests of particular individuals or groups of individuals within the Parish, but only in so far as this serves the interests of the Parish in general.

4. ELECTION

- 4.1 Election by a free secret ballot of all active members of the Parish, aged over 16 years after initial proposing and seconding of candidates with their own expressed consent. Parishioners aged over 16 years may stand for election propose and second a candidate and vote in the election.
- 4.2 Votes to be counted by Parish Assistants.
- 4.3 Election Candidates entitled to be present at count.
- 4.4 Papers destroyed after results verified.
- 4.5 Annual Elections: notice given first Sunday in May,
Bye-election: notice given as soon as Councillor resigns or membership ceases.
- 4.6 Election Process:
Notice of election on First Sunday.
Nominations close after Mass on 4th Sunday.
Voting on 7th and 8th Sunday.
Voting closes after Mass on 8th Sunday.

5. TENURE OF MEMBERSHIP

All elected members of the Council will have a three year term of office with a maximum of three consecutive terms. Parishioners completing nine years on the Council may stand for re-election to the Pastoral Council after 6 years at which point they will again have a three year term with a maximum of three consecutive terms. There is no maximum number of nine-year terms provided they are separated by 6 year periods out of office.

Should a member cease to attend, without adequate reason, for three consecutive meetings the Council may terminate his or her tenure forthwith by a simple majority in which case a bye-election must be organised (see 4.5 above).

6. CONSTITUTION

- 6.1. The Pastoral Council will be an advisory body only, and will have no vested powers. Decisions about changes in Parish activities are ultimately those of the Parish Priest*
- 6.2. The Pastoral Council shall consist of up to nine elected representatives of the parishioners together with the Parish Priest*, Parish Chair (elected separately by the parish), Deacon and representative of the Finance Group. Other members may be co-opted as full voting members in certain circumstances in response to particular needs and subject to the approval of the Parish Priest* and of a majority of the Council. The membership of the Pastoral Council should be broadly representative of the Parish as a whole, but representation of parish groups should be sought, if necessary by co-option.
- 6.3. Council meetings will be held bimonthly, though extraordinary meetings may be called by the Parish Priest*, or Parish Chair in times of special need.
- 6.4. It is an aspiration that Council meetings will not exceed 1 hour 30 minutes in duration.
- 6.5. The office of Chair of the Council will normally fall to the Parish Chairperson. The Parish Priest* may assume the role at his discretion.
- 6.6. The Secretary to the Council will be elected from among the membership by the members themselves.
- 6.7. The post of Deputy Chair/Assistant Secretary will be held by a single member of the council elected by the members themselves.
- 6.8. A Quorum shall be a minimum of seven members of the Pastoral Council.
- 6.9. Minutes of Council meetings will remain confidential to members of the Council, though a précis which may omit confidential information may be published in the Parish Newsletter, Parish Notice Board or Parish Website following agreement by the Chair of the Pastoral Council, Parish Priest or Deacon and Pastoral Council Secretary (3 people).
- 6.10. The Parish Priest* will have the right to disband the Pastoral Council should he feel that it is not fulfilling its obligations.

7. SERVICE TEAM

This will consist of the Parish Priest, Parish Chair, Deacon, Parish Secretary, and a Treasurer co-opted from the Finance Group.

* For Parish Priest read also Deacon/ Sister/ Person in Charge.