

Summary update

Firstly, as your current Parochial Church Council, we would like to apologise for the delay in voting on the resolution and finding a new parish priest.

Since the APCM in April 2023, there have been various issues with PCC membership and eligibility of some PCC members to vote in PCC meetings. We have been advised by Archdeacon Guy Elsmore to ensure that we rectify these errors before proceeding further with the vote on the resolution and appointing a new priest. The PCC was due to vote on the Resolution on 20 June, postponed to 18 July when a vote did not take place.

We need to do the following:

- correct an oversight made by the Diocese regarding the number of Deanery Synod representatives we are allowed to have (3 rather than 4)
- correct some procedural errors regarding the election of Deanery Synod representatives
- potentially elect some PCC members as there have been four resignations from the PCC since the APCM, so we have a number of vacancies to fill

There was a delay in the Diocese notifying us about number of Deanery Synod representatives we are now allowed. As a result at the APCM in April, we apparently unfortunately did not follow the correct procedure for electing the Deanery Synod representatives because we appointed four (Bob Scarff, Anne de Broise, Jane Hardy and Mike Parsons) not knowing we could only elect three. This meant that at subsequent PCC meetings some members of the PCC could not vote. There has also been a change in the Vice Chair since the APCM.

Deanery Synod Representatives attend all PCC meetings and 3 Deanery Synod Meetings a year, PCC members only attend the PCC meetings. You are welcome to talk to any member of the PCC to find out more of what is involved in being a Deanery Synod rep or an ordinary PCC member.

Once the PCC membership has been properly confirmed, we can take advice from the Diocese about facts and the implications of our decisions before voting on the resolution. After that vote takes place, we will finalise the draft Parish Profile and person specification so we can start the appointment process for a new Parish priest. See the background information on the journey so far if you wish to read the detail.

PCC membership

Our current electoral roll numbers (162) mean we can have up to 12 lay members of the PCC in addition to the 4 churchwardens and 3 Deanery Synod representatives.

Since the APCM the following people have resigned from the PCC:

Dave Williams, John Hickman, Rhian Parsons, Michael Parsons.

Since the APCM our Deanery Synod Representatives were allowed to attend Deanery and PCC meetings as non-voting observers. At the Deanery Synod meeting on 26 July 2023, our Treasurer Bob Scarff was co-opted by the Deanery Synod to be Deanery Synod Treasurer when he attended the meeting as a non-voting observer. One of the Deanery Synod representatives (Jane Hardy) has decided she would prefer to be an ordinary PCC member for All Saints; the other (Anne de Broise) is still willing to be a Deanery Synod representative. So we have 1 Deanery Synod post to fill.

If anyone on the electoral roll would like to join the PCC to fill some of the vacant positions or be a Deanery Synod representative, please complete and return the appropriate form by **27 August 2023** so we know whether to call a Special Parochial Church Meeting for an election, if we have more volunteers than posts. Printed forms can be found in both churches. The next PCC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 19 September 2023 at 7:30pm. If we do need a Special Parochial Church meeting, it would probably be held after the 9:30am service at SMSG on Sunday 17 September 2023.

Current membership of the PCC:

Vice Chair	Lay (co-opted while outgoing SMSG Churchwarden on 30 May then co-opted until the next APCM, after Bob Scarff resigned as Vice Chair)	Peter Eales
Honorary Secretary	Lay	Susi Crompton
Churchwarden All Saints	Churchwarden	Jilly Barby
Churchwarden All Saints	Churchwarden	Richard Hearne
Churchwarden SMSG	Churchwarden	Deb Kidd
Churchwarden SMSG	Churchwarden	Marilyn Bazeley
Member for SMSG	Lay	Jill Eales
Member for SMSG	Lay	Steve Thompson
Member for SMSG	Lay	<i>Vacant</i>
Member for SMSG	Lay	<i>Vacant</i>
Member for SMSG	Lay	<i>Vacant</i>
Member for All Saints	Lay	Anna Page
Member for All Saints	Lay	<i>Vacant</i>
Safeguarding Officer	Lay	Gwen Yates
Honorary Assistant Minister	Clerk in Holy orders licensed to parish	Fr Tunji Adebiyi

Proposed and seconded Deanery Synod representatives for April 2023 APCM but currently cannot vote in PCC meetings:

Deanery Synod rep	Deanery Synod (Lay) – would prefer to be a PCC member	Jane Hardy
Deanery Synod rep	Deanery Synod (Lay)	Anne de Broise
Deanery Synod rep	Deanery Synod (Lay) – resigned after July PCC meeting	Michael Parsons
Deanery Synod rep	Deanery Synod (Lay)	Bob Scarff

Co-opted at the 26 July 2023 Deanery Synod meeting by the Deanery Synod:

Deanery Synod Treasurer and PCC Treasurer	Deanery Synod (Lay)	Bob Scarff
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Background and the journey we have been on so far

When the previous incumbent went on sick leave and then retired on ill-health grounds, the 2022-23 PCC members found themselves in unknown territory regarding the way forward to appointing a new priest for our parish. One very important thing that we learnt was that we could do nothing about the Interregnum until the previous incumbent had finally left the parish in September 2022 (the interregnum started on 1 August 2022).

However, a concession allowing for earlier action was agreed and as a result a Q&A was held on 10 May 2022 to allow the Congregation to ask questions about the process to Archdeacon Guy Elsmore. Unfortunately, at the last minute Archdeacon Guy was unable to attend. The evening proceeded but with a less authoritative panel.

Because of this, the PCC decided to seek an alternative Q&A opportunity with a Panel comprising speakers from both sides of the Ordination of Women "argument". This took several weeks to organise but was eventually scheduled for 8 October. During the week leading up to this, two of the speakers said that they were unable to attend after all.

Even though this second Q&A had not been as planned, the PCC nevertheless decided to press ahead with the Questionnaire exercise that had been seen at the outset as being an essential part of the process. It was made clear though that the final decision would be made by the PCC and that the questionnaire was not a vote.

The outcome of the Questionnaire was presented to the PCC at a meeting on 15 November. On the pivotal question of the Ordination of Women, the questionnaire showed that 63% of respondents were in favour of the Ordination of Women, 17% were against and 20% had no particular view either way.

It was also shown that 30% of respondents would prefer a male priest to celebrate Mass in the Parish and 70% didn't mind if Mass was celebrated by a male or a female priest.

At this PCC meeting, Bob Scarff as Vice Chair, proposed that an Indicative Vote take place. This was a non-binding vote ahead of the "real" vote scheduled to take place two weeks later. This Indicative vote was eight votes in favour of retaining the status quo (only male Priests can celebrate Mass in our Parish) and seven votes in favour of rescinding the current arrangements. PCC members now realised that we had a dilemma.

Because of this dilemma; at the PCC meeting on 29 November, before the "real" vote was taken, Peter Eales proposed and Bob Scarff seconded (one from each side of the "argument") a Motion to postpone the "real" vote to allow for a period of reflection and to seek a compromise. This Motion was carried by 14 votes to 1.

Bob Scarff then proposed that a Sub Committee comprising of four PCC members (two from each side of the "argument") be formed and that this group be tasked with finding a compromise solution that a clear majority of the PCC could support. The four members selected were Peter Eales, Gwen Yates, Mike Parsons and Anna Page.

At the next PCC meeting held on 10 January 2023, the members of the Sub Committee reported that they had been able to find a Middle Way that they felt able to support; though they were still exploring what it all meant as there were some questions within the group. This Middle Way was outlined, and the PCC voted by 15 votes to 1 to ask the Sub Committee to continue exploring the detail of how to bring this Middle Way about.

At the next PCC meeting held on 15 March, one PCC member (a new member since the meetings of 15 and 29 November) expressed the view that the Middle Way should be put to a vote at the forthcoming Annual Parish Church Meeting. Whilst no PCC vote was taken on this suggestion, the majority view expressed was that the decision had to be made by the PCC.

At the next PCC meeting held on 16 May (the first with some new members following the APCM), the same PCC member put forward a Discussion Paper on the topic of the Middle Way and seeking a vote of one third of the PCC in support of a Petition to the Archdeacon to call a General Parish Meeting to allow for a vote on the Middle Way. There was insufficient support for this at the meeting, so the Vice Chair considered the matter closed. However, it is important to note that during the discussion the Vice Chair (Bob Scarff) had said that if such a meeting were called then he would consider his position as Vice Chair to be untenable and would resign.

In the days following this meeting, it became apparent that several PCC members had seen the Vice Chair's announcement as something designed purely to stifle further debate. So, Bob Scarff resigned as Vice Chair on Monday 22 May. At an emergency PCC meeting held on 30 May, Peter Eales was elected as Interim Vice Chair. This meeting was convened by Peter to correct the constitution of the PCC Standing committee.

Following this meeting we asked Archdeacon Guy if he could find two clergy, unknown to us all, to speak with us so that we could understand all the facts and the implications of our decisions. Unfortunately, this has not yet taken place.

The PCC wants the situation to move forward as much as you all do, but having come this far, the Archdeacon agrees that this is our opportunity to get it right, once and for all.