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Changes to Church representation Rules – effective 1 January 2020

New Church Representation Rules will come into force on 01 January 2020, by virtue of the Church Representation and Ministers Measure 2019, Amending Canon No. 39 and the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2019.

Why?

- The Rules needed streamlining - some rules date back to 1919.
- To give parishes more flexibility over the way they operate.
- To make the rules clearer and easier to understand.
- To reduce the administrative burden on multi-parish benefices, especially in rural areas.
- To remove constraints to mission and growth.

The new Rules entirely replace the old Rules but most of the provisions will still be familiar to PCC secretaries.

Highlights

- All provisions relating to parish governance (model rules) are in one section, part 9
- APCMs have the ability to change the model rules to suit mission
- Joint Church Councils can replace individual PCCs
- Provisions for data protection, electronic communication and business by correspondence
- Better representation of mission initiatives within the church structure
- Lay people must form the majority of a PCC
- APCMs to be held by 31 May
- Term limit of 6 years for Deanery Synod reps

Church House have produced a handy paperback copy of the new rules, which is available for £9.99. It has a useful introduction and what follows is largely a summary of that.

Outline of 2020 Church Representation Rules

- Part 1 Church electoral roll
- Part 2 Procedure to amend, supplement or replace the model rules
- Part 3 Deanery synods
- Part 4 Diocesan synods
- Part 5 House of Laity of General Synod
- Part 6 Appeal procedure against decisions relating to electoral roll membership and elections
- Part 7 Disqualification of persons from synodical bodies
- Part 8 Miscellaneous e.g. handling of personal data, email communications, interpretation
- Part 9 Model rules for parish governance
- Part 10 Forms
- Part 11 Index of defined terms

Main changes

Electoral Roll

- Names do not need to be removed from the roll during the course of the year
- Provision is made to avoid someone being incorrectly removed from the roll
- The roll can be published electronically
- The published roll must only include names, not any other personal data e.g. addresses.

Annual meetings

- APCMs to be held by 31st May
- Sidespersons are no longer appointed by APCM but by the PCC
- Can establish a joint council and thereafter the APCM can be held jointly with the other parish(es) in the benefice or group
- Can decide to use a single transferrable vote system at future APCMs
- Can decide to allow postal votes at future APCMs
- Can decide to amend, supplement or replace the model rules to suit its mission and life, subject to:
 - the retention of some mandatory provisions; and
 - Bishop's Council's approval - given if the changes make sufficient provision for lay representation, and effective governance of the parish.
- Deanery Synod reps appointed from 2020 can only serve two terms (six consecutive years)

PCC

- Part 9 contains model rules which apply to each parish, subject to amendments/supplements/replacements decided by an APCM and approved by the Bishops Council
- A PCC meeting is only quorate if the majority of members present are lay
- There is no longer a minimum number of meetings – the requirement is for a PCC to hold a sufficient number of meetings to enable the efficient transaction of its business
- Provision of a list of who is entitled to attend PCC meetings: others attend by PCC invitation
- If the Chair decides, business can be conducted by correspondence, including email

Joint Church Councils (JCCs)

- Applies to connected parishes: same benefice, benefices in plurality, or within group ministry
- Can transfer all property, rights, liabilities and function of PCC to JCC – PCC in abeyance
- Or can transfer only some property, rights, liabilities and functions - PCC operates alongside the JCC with each exercising the functions assigned/retained, as applicable

Mission initiatives (BMOs)

- Mandatory provision for the representation of BMOs on deanery synods, if Bishop directs
- Worshippers in BMOs eligible for election to Diocesan and General synods

Data protection

- Rules designed to avoid need to obtain consent from individuals to process their personal data
- Obligation for person who holds personal data for the purposes of the Rules to hold that data securely

December 2019