

ANNUAL MEETINGS, PCCS AND ALL THAT STUFF: A DUMMIES GUIDE!

Could you help?

Churches need to elect people to share the running of each parish church with the Vicar. I have never known a more important time than our present situation for us all to work together. We need to consider prayerfully how we respond to the situation presented by the Coronavirus pandemic. Major decisions will need to be made about the future direction of our churches and how we resource our activities -both financially and the people required.

Here's the simplest guide I can manage to the weird and wonderful world annual meetings and PCCs (parochial church councils):

During August 2020, legal notices will appear about the Annual Parochial Church Meetings for **Long Buckby (Sunday 23rd August 4.30pm** after the evening service); and West Haddon, **Sunday 13th September, 4.30pm** after the evening service. These meetings review the last year, elect church wardens and PCC members, and allow everyone on the electoral roll to ask questions about the church. (Watford and Winwick have held their meetings). Here is a simple explanation of the system:

Church Membership and the Electoral Roll. You become a member of Christ's Church by placing your faith in Jesus Christ and being baptised. However, for administrative purposes, to be on the Church Electoral Roll you also need to be 16 years or more and fill in a form declaring yourself to be a member of the Church of England. Being on the Electoral Roll allows you to attend and vote at the Annual Meeting, and to be on the Parochial Church Council (PCC). You can be on the Electoral Roll of more than one church. Forms are available in our churches and on-line if you want to go on the Electoral Roll.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) usually has to meet by 30th April each year - but deadlines have been extended for 2020. Only those on the Electoral Roll, plus the clergy, can attend. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting receives reports on the Electoral Roll, the activities of the PCC, the finances, the fabric of the church, and the activities of Deanery synod. It also elects PCC members, Deanery Synod members, appoints sides-people and an independent examiner for the accounts. Anyone at the APCM is entitled to ask a question about the PCC or general church matters. Confusingly, perhaps, **The Annual Meeting of Parishioners** meets immediately before the APCM to elect two Church Wardens. Nominations for churchwardens must be made in writing before the meeting starts.

Given the unusual circumstances in 2020 I would encourage people as far as possible to submit questions to me in advance for reporting at the meeting.

ROLES

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the legal responsibility of *'cooperating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.'*

The PCC manages the property and finance of the church and determines the nature of services. Members of PCC must be actual communicant members of the church (i.e. have received communion three times in the last year) and not be disqualified because of bankruptcy or safeguarding concerns. PCC members are usually elected for a three-year term (there are exceptions, and West Haddon has annual elections for all PCC members).

Church Wardens are senior lay officers in a parish with particular responsibilities of leadership and for church property. They are assisted during church services by sides-persons (called the 'welcome team' at St Lawrence).

Nominations wanted

Church Wardens (legal requirement – two for each church, elected annually): Current church wardens will be considering whether they are willing to stand again. Please consider seriously and prayerfully if you should stand.

PCC vacancies:

Long Buckby: 3 vacancies for 3 years; 2 for 2 years; 1 for 1 year; 3 Deanery Synod vacancies for 3 years
West Haddon: 10 vacancies (annual election for all 10); 1 Deanery Synod vacancy.

Deanery Synod: parish reps across Brixworth Deanery meet together 3x year to consider issues of mutual interest. They have a right to be consulted on important matters of national church interest.

There: that's all clear then! Please consider if you can serve the church by serving in one of the ways I've described.

Further information is on our website: <http://www.stlawrences.org.uk/>

Revd Graham Collingridge, 6th August 2020