

## **SOUTH BELCONNEN PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES (Draft)**

### **Introduction**

The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) has developed these guidelines by drawing on the guidelines in use by parishes in the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese and beyond. The PPC has also considered relevant Canon Law and the *Church Administration Handbook* (Second Edition, 2018). The PPC notes that Decree 5 of the recent Plenary Council is a strong statement in support of the role of parish pastoral councils as part of the practice of synodality in the governance of the Church. The Plenary Council has tasked the National Centre for Pastoral Research with developing guidelines and resources to support the flourishing of parish pastoral councils. Given this, these particular guidelines will be considered as provisional until they can be reviewed in the light of the work of the National Centre for Pastoral Research. As the timeline for implementation of the Plenary Council decree is not known, the PPC will use these guidelines in the interim and review them in September 2023.

### **Parish Pastoral Council Vision**

Walking together in faith to share God's love with all. We will do this by amplifying the energy in our parish and actively welcoming and engaging the community with strong stewardship.

### **Purpose and objectives of our Parish Pastoral Council**

The PPC is formed in accordance with Canon Law (see attached extract) and has the following purpose and objectives.

#### Purpose

To promote the Church's mission to live and communicate the love and values of Christ in our world. The PPC assists the parish priest in his leadership role and shares in the responsibility for the ongoing life and development of the faith community, working together with parishioners to provide support for their efforts to live as followers of Christ.

#### Objectives

1. To assess adequately the needs of the whole parish and its members, and to develop and implement a pastoral plan which will promote the common good of the parish.
2. To foster unity and a sense of community in the parish and to establish a vision for parish activities, and support and oversight those activities in a manner that will best serve the interests of the parish.
3. To promote programs and activities recommended by the Archbishop, Archdiocesan offices and agencies, and, where applicable, other dioceses/archdioceses as well as the PPC itself.

### **Characteristics of our Parish Pastoral Council**

1. **Prayerful.** The PPC devotes time to reflective prayer at each meeting and makes provision at least once a year to have special time spent together solely in prayer, reflection and spiritual sharing.
2. **Pastoral.** The PPC is pastoral in the sense that its purpose is to assist in the development of an overall mission plan for the parish in order to make Christ evermore present to the parishioners and to the wider community.
3. **Representative.** PPC members represent the entire parish community and exercise their responsibility with a concern that includes all parishioners.
4. **Discerning.** Through a prayerful and consultative consensus process, the PPC merges the diverse experiences, skills and gifts of the Council members, and having listened to the parishioners' needs and ideas, discerns recommendations concerning the direction and priorities of the parish.
5. **Responsive.** The PPC includes Catholic social teaching in discerning and responding to issues, whether local, national or international.
6. **Enabling.** In the spirit of God's love, PPC members strive to recognise and support each other's gifts and seek ways in which each parishioner's gifts may surface, grow, and flourish for the good of the Church.

### **Membership**

The parish priest, with advice of the PPC, approves membership of the PPC and may directly appoint parishioners, including appointments to fill a vacancy occurring between elections.

### Ex officio members

The parish priest, any assigned assistant priest(s), permanent deacons, pastoral associates, the Principal or a representative from St Matthew's and St Vincent de Paul's Primary Schools and a member of the Finance Council if they have not been elected to the Pastoral Council.

### Elected and appointed members

1. A Catholic who is registered and active in the parish and lives within its boundaries. A minority of the appointed and elected members may be active, registered parishioners who are non-residents.
2. At least one youth member, at least eighteen years old, may be elected or appointed. School-aged youth members may be negotiated with the PPC.
3. At least one representative from the Parish's Korean community.
4. Membership is actively encouraged from parishioners of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
5. The parish priest can determine the number of elected and appointed members, taking account of parish pastoral needs, but ordinarily the minimum number of these members is seven.

### **Term of office**

1. Two years, with possibility of re-election or reappointment. Members may serve only two consecutive terms.
2. A maximum of half of the PPC seats are to be open for appointment/election or reappointment/re-election at one time.
3. In the event that the parish priest dies, resigns, or is transferred, the primary function of the PPC, providing counsel to the parish priest, ceases. However, during the vacancy of the parish, the PPC assists the senior parochial vicar or the Archdiocesan-appointed administrator with the preparation of the materials for the parish profile for the consultation meetings. The PPC also helps in the welcoming of the new parish priest. After the new parish priest has been installed, he should consider reconvening the existing PPC, near their usual meeting time, or least within two months.

### **Selection process for elected members**

1. The parish priest, with the advice of the PPC, determines the selection process. This should include a special week of prayer in which the parish asks for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the selection process.
2. The process should include a minimum of two weeks of advertising in the Parish Bulletin with nominations submitted to the Parish Secretary. Parishioners may self-nominate indicating their willingness to serve or may nominate another parishioner who they believe has the right attributes. These nominated parishioners will be contacted by the parish priest or a nominated person to determine their willingness to be considered.
3. Should the number of nominations be greater than vacancies, parishioners of eighteen years of age or older are invited to attend a discernment session which will end with an election. Nominees are elected who receive the highest number of votes (subject to the approval of the parish priest). All nominees will be advised of the outcome.
4. Any school-age candidates will be managed by a separate process to be determined in that event.

### **Roles**

1. The PPC will elect from its members (other than ex-officio members) a Chairperson (or co-Chairpersons) and Secretary and other such officers as are required to meet the needs of the Council. If co-Chairpersons are not elected, a vice-Chairperson may be elected.
2. In the event of the parish priest's absence from a regularly scheduled meeting of the PPC, the Council may not undertake new business, or business which is not included on the agenda.
3. If the Chairperson is not attending the meeting (or both co-Chairpersons are not attending) and there is no vice-Chairperson, the parish priest or a member nominated by the parish priest may chair the meeting.
4. The Secretary prepares the agenda for each meeting in consultation with the Chairperson/s and parish priest as appropriate.
5. The Secretary emails out the agenda in a timely manner.
6. The Secretary records the attendance and Minutes of each meeting. They are to ensure all e-communications are maintained, with special reference to 'Action Items'. Minutes are to be

forwarded to all members in a timely manner, following clearance by the Chairperson/s. A copy of the latest Minutes should be sent to the Parish Office and, if appropriate, made available to parishioners via the parish website or other means.

7. Parish groups/teams reports should be included as required by the relevant PPC agenda.

#### **Meetings of the PCC**

1. The meeting dates and a prayer leader for each meeting for the year are to be agreed at the end of the first meeting of each year.
2. A minimum of five regularly scheduled meetings of the PPC are to occur during the calendar year.
3. Subject to the discretion of the parish priest, a quorum will normally require a minimum of 3 elected and appointed members.
4. Acknowledgement of Country to be offered at the first meeting of each year:

*"In continuing our Parish commitment to Reconciliation and in line with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tradition, it is customary to acknowledge the country as we pass through. Today we acknowledge and pay our respects to the First Peoples, traditional custodians of the lands and waterways, the Ngunnawal people, and thank them for their continued hospitality.*

*We acknowledge and celebrate the continuation of a living culture that has a unique role in this region. We also acknowledge Elders past and present as well as our emerging leaders of tomorrow and thank them for their wisdom and guidance as we walk in their footsteps."*

5. Meetings of the PPC should be open to all parishioners at least twice a year.
6. The parish priest may call for an extra-ordinary meeting when appropriate.
7. Communication and e-Communication: if a matter is urgent, the parish priest or a Chairperson/s is to ring or text members. If Council members agree an App (e.g. WhatsApp) may be established by the Secretary or Chairperson/s. Urgent matters require a maximum of 48 hour turn around. Email may be used for non-urgent matters.
8. It is accepted that there may be rare occasions when grave or serious issues require the immediate decision of the parish priest without PPC consultation or discussion.

#### **Conflict resolution**

In the event that the parish priest and the PPC, or a member thereof, develop serious and continuous conflict so that they cannot work together productively, the parish priest, following appropriate discernment, must request the assistance of the regional Vicar Forane (Dean), Archdiocesan Vicar General or the chair of another PPC in facilitating a charitable and just solution. Should this not occur, the Chairperson may make recourse to these same individuals.

#### **Relationship with the Parish Finance Council**

1. The responsibility for providing counsel to the parish priest concerning the administration of the parish finances, budget, and property is vested in the Parish Finance Council (PFC).
2. In order to assure good communication, a member of the PFC can be appointed to the PPC by the parish priest, if such a person has not already been elected in the regular election process. At the very least, a financial summary of parish finances should be admitted to a PPC meeting twice a year.
3. Each year the PFC assists the parish priest in making a report to the PPC concerning the finances and property of the parish.

#### **Relationship with the Parish Liturgy Committee**

1. The Parish Liturgy Committee is responsible for the stewardship of parish liturgy including Sunday Mass and other liturgical celebrations. It plans liturgies, coordinates the contributions of musicians and artists, and facilitates the full, conscious and active participation of the parish community. The Parish Liturgy Committee is responsible for educating the parish as a whole, as well as those exercising particular roles and responsibilities, about the Church's teachings on liturgy.
2. The Parish Pastoral Council is responsible for communicating the Parish's vision and priorities to the Parish Liturgy Committee through the pastoral plan. The Parish Liturgy Committee is responsible for reflecting the Parish's vision and priorities within its liturgical planning.

3. The Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Liturgy Committee should have an agreed means of communication and consultation that satisfies both committees. This could include cross-membership by one or more members, sharing minutes of meetings, and/or through written reports or requests for advice.

#### **Attachment – Extract of Canon Law**

The Code of Canon Law states that:

- “After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral Council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral Council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity.” (Canon 536, par.1)
- “This pastoral Council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.” (Canon 536, par. 2)
- “Each parish is to have a finance Council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this Council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regards for the prescription of canon 532.” (Canon 537)