

Constitution

St James RC Church Twickenham St James Church Parish Council

Introduction

This document details the role of the lay baptised, parish priest and Constitution of St James RC Church Parish Council.

Role of the Lay Baptised

The Second Council of the Vatican reminds us of the active part lay people take in the life of the Church. As baptised people, we have the right and duty to use the talents given us by God for the common good of the whole community. When the baptised do so act, we respond to the Decree of the Vatican Council on the Laity, which calls us to play our part as Christians in the work of the Church in the modern world. When the baptised, in co-operation with others, particularly their fellow parishioners and clergy, do work for the common good, they fulfil their prophetic role in building the Kingdom of God, in service to those in need, and in proclaiming the Gospel.

"Lay people should also know that it is generally the function of their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city. From priests they may look for spiritual light and nourishment. Let the lay people not imagine that their pastors are always such experts, that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily give a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission. Rather, enlightened by Christian wisdom and giving close attention to the teaching authority of the Church, let the lay people take their own distinctive role."

[Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Council of the Vatican II § 43]

Role of the Parish

"A *Parish* is a certain community of Christ's faithful stably established within a particular Church whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor."

[The Code of Canon Law canon 515 §1]

Role of the Parish Priest

"The *Parish Priest* is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him. He exercises the pastoral care of the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, whose ministry of Christ he is called to share, so that for this community he may carry out the offices of teaching, sanctifying and ruling with the cooperation of other priests or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of Christ's faithful, in accordance with the law."

[The Code of Canon Law canon 519]

Constitution

St James RC Parish Council

Constitution

1. Title:

1.1 The title shall be "St James RC Parish Council", hereinafter called the "Council."

2. Aims & Objectives:

2.1 To give an opportunity for members of the parish community to share with the parish priest in the apostolate of the parish, in the spirit of the Parish Mission Statement, within the Church, so as to assist the parish priest in forming and implementing policies which affect the life and work of the parish.

2.2 To provide a channel of communication for the opinions and proposals of the members of the parish community, and between the various groups working in the parish.

2.3 To enable the parish to make the fullest use of the particular skills and professional abilities of the parishioners.

3. Relationship of the Council with the Parish Priest:

3.1 The Council shall exercise its functions within the norms of the Code of Canon Law.

4. Membership:

The Council shall comprise:

4.1 The permanent members:

4.1.1 The Parish Priest.

4.1.2 A representative from the Finance Committee.

4.2. The foundation members:

4.2.1 Up to Four [4] lay members appointed by the parish priest

4.3 The elected members:

4.3.1 Four [4] lay members of the Parish.

4.4 The Co-opted Members [if any]:

4.4.1 The Council shall have the power to co-opt additional lay persons for such specific time as the Council shall decide, which period shall not exceed one year.

4.4.2 Such co-opted members shall not have the right to vote at Council meetings.

5. Elections:

To be held to elect the four [4] lay members under par 4.2.1 above:

5.1 Elections shall take place at the Parish Annual General Meeting each year.

5.2 All registered members of the parish community over the age of 18 years who

Constitution

are in full communion with the RC church are eligible for nomination to the Council, and to vote in the ballot.

5.3 Nominations, for which the prior consent of the nominee must be obtained, shall be submitted to the Parish Priest at least seven [7] days before the date of the Annual General Meeting.

5.4 Election shall be by simple majority votes

5.5 Foundation members shall normally serve a renewable term of three years, elected members a term of two years, renewable by re-election.

5.6 In the event of a vacancy caused by an elected or foundation member ceasing to hold membership of the Council for any reason before the expiry of his/her term, the Council shall have the power to fill the vacancy. In such a case the person appointed shall hold office until the Annual General Meeting of the Parish at which the original office holder would be due to retire.

5.7 The Parish Priest has the right to retire foundation members from the parish council after informing the parish council of his intentions.

6. Officers of the Council:

6.1 The Council shall elect a Chairperson, and a Vice-Chairperson (if required) from the Council.

6.2 The Council shall appoint a Secretary.

7. Meetings of the Parish:

7.1 The Annual General Meeting shall be held, with one month's notice being given by the Council.

7.1.1 Such notice shall be accompanied by an Agenda and any necessary reports.

7.2 An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called at any time by the Council upon giving one month's notice thereof, such notice to be accompanied by an Agenda.

8. Meetings of the Council:

8.1 The Council shall meet at least four (4) times each year, but as often as thought necessary by the Parish Priest and the Chairperson of the Council.

8.2 The Minutes of all Council meetings shall be made available to parishioners.

8.3 A minimum of four (4) Council members, of whom one (1) shall be an elected member and one (1) be an foundation member shall form a quorum. Nominees can represent members, but do not carry voting rights.

8.4 In the event the Parish Priest is unable to be present at the notified Council meeting, the Council may still meet to discuss and make recommendations as appropriate to the business in hand. Any such resolutions shall be reviewed with Parish Priest at the earliest opportunity.

8.5 The Parish Priest shall have a casting vote where necessary.

Constitution

8.6 Notices of Meeting shall suffice if published in the parish weekly Newsletter, and/or by display on the Parish Notice Board.

9. Council business:

9.1 The Council may appoint a sub committee to conduct such business the Council shall authorise from time to time.

9.2 The Council shall determine the Terms of Reference for such committees, and remain fully accountable and responsible for such committees.

10. Amendments to the Constitution:

10.1 Amendment to the Constitution may be made at an Annual General Meeting of the parish or at a parish council meeting in the inaugural year.

10.2 A majority of two thirds of those present at the meeting shall be necessary to carry any amendment.

10.3 Due notice of proposed amendment shall be detailed in the published agenda of the Annual General Meeting.

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