

St. Anthony's Parish

Guidelines on the role and operation of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Forward

Our Pastoral Council is a ministry team made up of committed people of faith chosen by our parish community, who work together with our Priest Director and Parish Coordinator to address the needs and concerns of our Parish and beyond, no matter how great or small they may seem. They share responsibility for the development of our community of faith aligned with the mission of the Catholic Church. The Parish Pastoral Council has final responsibility for providing leadership in all areas of parish life.

As local Church, we are a community of faith in dialogue with the world. We believe our mission is to make the person and teaching of Jesus present and relevant to this part of the world in which we live, including ourselves and our own community.

In St Anthony's Parish we strive to be a prayerful, welcoming and generous community of people, a Eucharistic community who:

- Know and care for each other.
- Are sensitive and responsive to the hopes and needs of people in the wider community.
- Are committed to building a society that is more just, more humane, more tender and more sustaining of every form of life.
- Celebrate the gracious welcome of God to all.

In the light of the Gospel, the Pastoral Council will encourage ongoing personal and community growth and renewal of faith and life. It will:

- Continue to search out and respond to the hopes, ideas, concerns and criticisms of parishioners.
- Support and affirm existing parish groups and initiatives.
- Maintain a focus which is outward looking and inclusive.

Membership

Up to nine elected Parishioners with our Priest Director and Parish Coordinator.

Representation

Each is a representative of the whole parish community and not a representative of a specific group. The Council will have as broad a membership as possible with regard to age, gender, race and ethnic origin.

Formation

There will be a day of formation for all Council members annually.

Term of Office and Elections

Elections are to take place every two years. A Term of Office is for two years with the option, after discussion within the Council, of extending for two more years. A member must stand down after four years. Any member is eligible to stand again for election after a two year break. New members should be appointed by September of each year.

Nominations

Recommendations for nomination will be called early in the year from the parish community. An information session will be offered to all those recommended and, at the conclusion of this session, nominations will be finalized by the PPC members. All parishioners will be invited to participate in the process of selecting Council members. Elections will occur in July with appointment finalized by September.

Dealing with Vacancies

If desirable, the Council may fill a vacancy by invitation, until the next selection process. A member filling a casual vacancy completes the term of the person whom he/she is replacing.

Responsibilities of Members

Members are expected to attend regular meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council and, where appropriate to assist with organizing and running the meeting and to provide input into deliberations of the Council by:

- Discussion at Council meetings.
- Involvement in working groups and sub-committees.

- Developing a spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen so as to hear and understand the issues affecting the life of parishioners and their impact on the community generally.
- Representing the Parish Pastoral Council when required (e.g. at other parish meetings and at regional/deanery or diocesan meetings).
- Taking opportunities for personal faith development and for gaining skills for effective participation in the Council.
- Providing prayerful support to other members of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Office Bearers

The office consists of the Chair and Secretary together with the Priest Director (or his delegate) and the Parish Coordinator. Office Bearers are to be chosen from the elected members by the Council annually.

The role of the Executive is to:

- Reflect on the effectiveness of the previous Council meeting.
- Take responsibility for the preparation and distribution of the agenda for each meeting.
- Conduct the business of the council between meetings.
- Oversee the development of proposals for consideration by the Council.
- Represent the Council as required.
- Promote additional formation opportunities outside the regular meetings.

Meetings

Meetings are held once per month (excluding December).

Procedures

The Agenda is to be finalised by the Executive and circulated one week in advance of meeting with any other notes, minutes and material for formation. The Parish Pastoral Council should where possible maintain membership on the Parish Finance Committee.

Sub Committees

Sub Committees may be set up for specific purposes and with a definite time line in place. These groups would include at least one member of the Council.

Decision-making Process

This will be by consensus with the wisdom of each member being heard and contributing to the decisions of the Council. A political model, using majority voting, lobbying, competition, and domination, is to be avoided.

Communication with the Community

There will be a regular reporting to the community. Communication is to be a two-way process. Ways are to be found for the Council to continue to receive input from the community.

Review and Amendments to Guidelines

These guidelines are to be reviewed every two years. (The next review is set for March 2018).

Relationship between PPC and Parish Finance Committee

The Parish Finance Committee (PFC) relates to the administrative responsibilities of the pastor, it should not be a part of the Parish Pastoral Council structure. Positive communication between the two bodies is essential. Information should be shared regarding the parish finances in order to implement the pastoral plans and priorities and to ensure sound stewardship of the parish's resources. Where possible it is recommended that a member of the PPC attend the PFC meetings along with the Priest Administrator. The Parish Finance Committee advises on the adequacy of resources to accomplish the mission and specific ministries of the parish. The PPC will make a budget submission of pastoral priorities in April of each year to assist the PFC in determining the annual budget.

John Heaps: Parish Pastoral Councils (E.J. Dwyer. 1993)

“The success of a diocesan or parish pastoral council demands a deep understanding and acceptance of what the church has said about itself over the past decades. Still more difficult ... it demands a degree of unselfish, Christian maturity that is greater than required by former church structures.

The creation of either understanding or maturity is not within the power of legislation. The success of parish pastoral council does not depend upon laws about them. It depends upon the understanding and acceptance of the mutually interacting roles of the members of the community. It depends upon the willingness to respond to the ministry and mission of the church. It requires the openness and patience to discern the best response to our own reality here and now.”