



# Being a Parish Councillor in the Diocese of Bendigo

## Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to be nominated for election or appointment as a Parish Council member in the Diocese of Bendigo. It is a position of significant responsibility and leadership in your parish. It is a position of trust and is a reflection of the goodwill and esteem in which you are held.

Parish Councils are elected or appointed for a three-year term. Any Parish Councillor for various reasons can resign at any time and be replaced. Parish Councillors may serve two consecutive terms, but then must take a break for at least one term so as to allow others to take their turn in leadership. This may be varied, but only after approval from the Diocesan Executive.

The Church is the Body of Christ on earth and the role of Parish Councillors, above all else, is to see that the part of the body to which they belong is in good health.

*Jesus told us to love one another as he loves us. As Christians we know our life together is strengthened when our behaviour is consistent with our faith. However our experience of being together can be challenging, particularly when there are differences. So it is important to be clear about what is loving, appropriate behaviour towards each other (Being Together)*

## The duties of Parish Councillors

### **The duties and responsibilities of a Parish Councillor as set down in the Parish Administration Act are:**

- 6.1 In order to further the mission of God in the Diocese, Parish Councils have responsibility for the following matters:
- (a) to ensure that clear and achievable goals with realistic strategies, are set and reviewed annually, using the Mission Action Plan template, building on the strengths of the Parish community;
  - (b) to work within the rules of governance as set down by the Parish Administration Act
  - (c) to ensure that good communication is maintained between all members of the Parish community;
  - (d) to provide all things necessary for the celebration of divine service and the administration of the sacraments;
  - (e) to have charge of the funds of the Parish, subject to the terms of any trusts, and to ensure that there is sufficient income for the purposes of the Parish;
  - (f) to ensure that the Parish adopts the best possible policy and practice in relation to the environment and sustainability;
  - (g) to provide a suitable residence for the Incumbent or other housing arrangements as approved by the Diocesan Executive;
  - (h) to ensure that adequate insurance against death, sickness and injury of all stipendiary clergy licenced to the Parish is provided;
  - (i) to ensure that all buildings and Parish-owned contents are adequately insured;
  - (j) to appoint, control and dismiss where necessary all persons employed by the Parish and to provide for the remuneration of all such persons;
  - (k) to ensure that accurate financial records are maintained and that an audited statement of accounts and balance sheet is presented to the Annual Parish Meeting and forwarded to the Registry as and when required by the Council of the Diocese and requested by the Registrar;
  - (l) to ensure that a financial report is presented by the Treasurer to each meeting of the Parish Council;
  - (m) to support the work of Diocesan initiatives and involvement in welfare and social justice, particularly through Diocesan agencies: New Horizons Welfare Services, Bencourt Care and Anglicare Victoria;
  - (n) to maintain effective networks of information and shared purpose between the Parish and the Deanery.

## What conduct is necessary to sustain the task?

### 1. Parish Councillors must understand the responsibilities and limitations of their role:

- These are summarized above and set out in the Parish Administration Act (Amended 2016)

### 2. In behavior and speech Parish Councillors are to set an exemplary standard

- In taking up leadership within the parish, Parish Councillors are bound by:
  - a. 'Faithfulness in Service: A Code of Practice for church workers and leaders', and
  - b. The Lay Authorisations policy.
- A Parish Council covenant

### 3. The General Synod statement 'Being Together' is a starting point for all Parish Councillors in establishing a Code of Practice for their role in the parish.

- 'Being Together' is consistent with 'Faithfulness in Service' and forms the basic expectation for behavior with each other.

#### 1. Being a Community

- We will **seek the common good** of the church, not just our own interests.
- We will **encourage each other to participate** in the life of the church.
- We will be **aware of how our behaviour affects others**.

The role of a Parish Councillor is to help build and encourage the common good of the church community. This means acting in accordance with the Biblical principles of honesty, fairness and accountability.

#### 2. Relating to each other

- We will **treat each other with respect and dignity** irrespective of ability, gender, sexuality, race, age, or contribution of the church.
- We will **act with integrity and honesty** in our interactions with each other.

While Parish Council members will obviously have friends in the congregation(s), you are urged to treat all parishioners the same as much as possible.

#### 3. Communicating with each other

- We will **communicate respectfully** with others, and not in a way that threatens, belittles or humiliates.
- We will **respect confidences**, and refrain from speculation and gossip.

## Practically, this means that Parish Councillors will:

- Be careful with their use of language, especially in times of disagreement.
- Refrain from any physical contact with parishioners, except for shaking of hands.
- Conduct visits to parishioners in the company of another warden or Parish Councillor. Preferably one of the opposite sex to yourself.
- Ensure that diocesan protocols in relation to the handling of church funds are observed and maintained
- Be very cognizant of boundaries; you are not expected to do everything or solve every problem in the parish. Consult, seek advice, call the Diocese!

## Being nominated as a Parish Councillor

To be nominated as a Parish Councillor you need to:

- Be on your Parish's Electoral Roll before the roll closes (which involves signing a declaration warranting that you can be listed prior to 30 days before the Annual Parish Meeting),
- Be nominated according to the process used in your parish (this is usually via two other members of the Electoral Roll or directly by the Rector),
- Be able to fulfil the Parish Administration Act, **significantly this includes not having served for two terms immediately preceding this one.**

### SCHEDULE 1

#### Parish Electoral Roll Declaration

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, wish to be enrolled on the Electoral Roll of the Anglican Parish of \_\_\_\_\_

I declare that:

- (a) I am not less than eighteen years (18) old;
- (b) I have been baptised;
- (c) I am a member of the Anglican Church;
- (d) I am not on the Electoral Roll of another Anglican Parish; and
- (e) I am a regular worshipper in this Parish.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

*Figure: The 'Parish Electoral Roll Declaration' which must be signed to allow for addition to the parish electoral roll*