

**To all Parochial Clergy and PCC
Secretaries** (or Churchwardens or
Administrators in parishes without a PCC
Secretary)

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ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS IN 2026

I am writing to all Parochial clergy, PCC Secretaries (and in parishes without a PCC Secretary to a Churchwarden or Administrator) as we have reached the time of the year when you will be making arrangements for the annual meeting of parishioners and for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) which should take place before the end of May.

Full details of the procedures for your APCM including deadlines, timings and notice periods are set out in the Church Representation Rules 2025. Every Parish should have a copy of the Rules, so please ensure that you obtain them and are working from the most recent version. If you do not wish to buy a copy, the rules are available for free online at:

[Church Representation Rules online - contents | The Church of England](#)

Alternatively, copies of the latest (2025) edition, are available from Church House Publishing [CH Publishing CRR 2025](#) (postal address Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ) or [CRR 2025 Amazon](#)

At the Summer 2025 General Synod, changes were approved to the Church Representation rules, which can be found here: [The Church Representations Rules \(Amendment\) \(no.2\) Resolution 2025](#)

The Parish Resources website is a useful tool: all of the relevant forms for the APCM can be downloaded at:

[APCMs - Parish Resources](#)

If you are a new PCC Secretary and haven't organised an APCM before the procedure can seem a little daunting but we are here to help: if, having looked through the Rules and visited the Parish Resources website you would like any clarification or advice please contact ruth.laemmel@chester.anglican.org and we will be happy to assist you.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information about matters that must be dealt with at these meetings: the revision of the Electoral Roll; the election of PCC members; the appointment of Officers; and the election of Deanery Synod members.

1. The Electoral Roll

A completely new Electoral Roll having been compiled in 2025, it is only necessary this year for each parish to revise its Roll, with a report on the changes being submitted to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). In accordance with Church Representation Rules 3 to 5, at least 14 days' notice of the revision must be given, and the revision itself must be completed at least 15 days, but no more than 28 days, before the APCM. To enable any error corrections to be made, a copy of the revised list must then be displayed for at least 14 days. Very importantly, **ONLY names** are to be published on any publicly available lists: Church Representation Rule 5(3) states, "The roll as published, and the copy made available for inspection, must include every name entered on the roll but no other personal data."

The chair, vice-chair, secretary or electoral roll officer of a PCC **must**, no later than 1 July in each year, give the Secretary of the Diocesan Synod written notification. This is done by emailing the number of names on the roll at the date of the APCM to er@chester.anglican.org [Please see attached document "How to submit ER".]

This could also be done by sending a suitable written notification to Church House.

Please be aware that a certificate of the Electoral Roll is no longer needed, and an email suffices.

2. Election of PCC Members

Procedures for electing PCC Members are set out in Part 9 of the Church Representation Rules 2025.

I. Qualification for election to a PCC

Rule M8 (1) sets out the requirements. This means that a lay person must be an actual communicant, aged over 16, and unless they are under 18 have been entered on the electoral roll for at least six months before they may be elected to the PCC.

II. Number of members of the PCC

- a. Rules M15 (8) and (9) concern the number of elected lay members of the PCC (ie not counting priests, churchwardens and other ex officio members nor co-opted members).
- b. Unless your APCM resolved otherwise last year or before, the PCC should have:
 - i. **Six** lay representatives if there are no more than 50 names on the electoral roll;
 - ii. **Nine** lay representatives if there are more than 50 but no more than 100 names on the electoral roll;
 - iii. A further **three** lay representatives for every hundred (or part thereof) names on the electoral roll up to a maximum of **fifteen** members.

III. **Term of office of PCC members**

Rule M16 means that (unless the APCM decided last year or before to retain annual terms of office) elected members will hold office for three years, with one third retiring each year.

3. **Appointment of Officers**

Churchwardens

Churchwardens are chosen at the meeting of the parishioners (which is usually held immediately prior to the APCM and, unlike that meeting, may be attended by all parishioners not just those on the Electoral Roll). The procedure is set out in the Churchwardens Measure 2001 (found in the Supplementary Material at the end of the Church Representation Rules). It is a requirement of that Measure that candidates for office as churchwardens must be nominated and seconded in writing in advance of the meeting. Each nomination paper must also include a statement, signed by the person nominated, that (s)he is willing to serve as a churchwarden and is not disqualified from doing so.

The Measure includes a provision defining the maximum period someone may serve as churchwarden. Elections continue to be for a year at a time, but under the current rules someone who has served six consecutive years as churchwarden may not be elected again as warden for the same parish until after a two-year gap. The Measure allows for a meeting of parishioners to decide that the six-year rule should not apply in their parish.

It is important that elected Churchwardens attend a visitation service to be sworn into their role. If a Churchwarden fails to attend a visitation service, it may be difficult to make arrangements to do this at an alternative time. A Churchwarden that is not sworn into post will lose the ability to act as Churchwarden. Please ensure your Churchwardens are aware of this requirement. Details on the visitation services will be available via our website

[Archdeacons' Visitations](#)

Sidespeople

Sidespeople are no longer to be appointed by the APCM, (Rule M6 (6)). Instead, they should be appointed by the PCC at its next meeting.

Other Officers

The Lay Chair, PCC Secretary, PCC Treasurer and Electoral Roll Officer are appointed by the PCC at its first meeting after the APCM in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. It is possible to hold a very short PCC meeting immediately following the APCM at which the only item on the agenda is the appointment of officers.

4. **CMS (Contact Managements System) update**

At the beginning of February, the person updating the details for your parish – the Parish Updater, will receive an email from “Diocese of Chester – mailings@cofeportal.org”, which will contain a link to review and update the postholders **after** the APCM. The email will be preceded by an email from Ruth Laemmel containing a guide on how to do this. After a time of moderation of all submitted changes at Church House, the changes will appear on CMS.

Please ensure that your parish has a Parish Updater who can be reached by email.

Further details relating to our Privacy Notice can be found on our website.

[Privacy Notice Chester](#)

If you have any further questions regarding the Contact Management System (CMS) or can't identify a Parish Updater, please contact Ruth Laemmel at ruth.laemmel@chester.anglican.org or by calling Church House as soon as possible.

Information on all platforms with annual deadlines for parishes can be found [here](#). A PDF version of the webpage can be downloaded at the end of the page.

5. Parochial representatives on Deanery Synod

The APCM must this year elect its lay representative to the appropriate Deanery Synod for the period 1st July 2026 to 30th June 2029. Anyone who is currently a Deanery Synod member having been elected as such by your PCC will cease to be so this summer, and if they wish to continue as a member they will need to be re-elected. Please note: anyone who is currently a member of General Synod or Diocesan Synod or is a Licensed Layworker or Licensed Pastoral Worker in your parish is AUTOMATICALLY a member of Deanery Synod and does not need to be counted in the number of lay people you elect.

The number to be elected depends on the number of names on the electoral roll at the 2024 APCM. A table listing all the numbers has been sent to each PCC Secretary already, and is attached to this email: [*Deanery Synod Numbers for 2026 Election*](#)

Once the representatives have been elected, you should send their names and addresses to the Deanery Synod Secretary or Lay Chair by 1st July 2026 at the latest, as they **must** provide a list of the names to the diocesan electoral registration officer (Diocesan Secretary) as soon as possible.

There will be elections later this year for General Synod so please ensure that you have filled any remaining casual vacancies as described in CRR Rule 28. Please note in particular CRR Rule 28(3)

"An election to fill a casual vacancy among the parochial representatives elected to a deanery synod is, where possible, to be held at a time which will enable all casual vacancies among the parochial representatives so elected to have been filled by the time of the next election to the House of Laity of the General Synod; but no such election is invalid merely because such a casual vacancy is not filled."

After the APCM Meeting

Send the Electoral Roll number preferably by email to: er@chester.anglican.org as laid out in the attached document *"How to submit ER"*.

Safeguarding Training and DBS

Please be aware that it is a requirement for some posts such as PCC members and Churchwardens to do Safeguarding training and/or DBS Checks.

Details of what training is required and who should be DBS checked, as well as where to get further information, can be found on the safeguarding pages of the website.

Diocese of Chester Safeguarding Training

DBS Disclosures

Thank you in advance for your help in ensuring that our records are up to date. If there are further changes throughout the year, it would be helpful if you could keep us informed.

If anything in this letter is not clear or if you require any further help, please do not hesitate to contact us.

With many thanks for your work as a PCC Secretary.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Pleace', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jane Pleace
Diocesan Secretary/ CEO
Enc

Checklist

Before the annual meeting of parishioners and the APCM:

- ☐ Give notice of the new Electoral Roll
- ☐ Publish the notices of the meetings
- ☐ Complete the Electoral Roll
- ☐ Display the names on the new Electoral Roll for 14 days
- ☐ Obtain nominations for Church Wardens and PCC members (although PCC members can be nominated at the meeting)

After the meetings:

- ☐ Email to er@chester.anglican.org or send by post the number of people on the electoral roll as soon as possible and by 1 July 2026
- ☐ Display the results of the elections for 14 days
- ☐ Elect Officers and sidespeople at the first PCC meeting following the APCM
- ☐ Parish Updater to update CMS latest 30 June 2026
- ☐ Churchwardens to go to Visitation Service