



ST JOSEPH'S PARISH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 According to the Canon Law of the Church, there is no Clerical or Legal obligation on the Parish Priest to constitute a Parish Council. The formation of such a body therefore, is voluntary and at the discretion of the Parish Priest.
- 1.2 It is totally dependent on whether or not the Parish Priest believes that a Council can assist in organizing and managing the day-to-day routine tasks that can be carried out by the Lay Community, allowing Priests to devote more of their time to spiritual and pastoral needs of Parishioners.
- 1.3 At St. Joseph's, Gerrards Cross, the Parish Priest has chosen to establish a Council, whose purpose and responsibilities are detailed below, in the following constitution.

2. Purpose:

- 2.1 The Parish Council (The Council) is a non-executive, consultative and advisory body, constituted to support the Parish Priest in fulfilling his parochial and diocesan obligations, by offering advice on all aspects of pastoral care and activity in the Parish, in order to foster a sense of community throughout the Parish.
- 2.2 The Council therefore, will support the Parish Priest in the provision of sound administrative procedures and the encouragement and participation of all parishioners and parish organisations in the life of the Church.
- 2.3 Advice on income and expenditure is provided by the finance committee, whose chair will be a member of the Council.
- 2.4 The ultimate responsibility for all Parish affairs rests with the Parish Priest who, should he so wish, can disband the Council without consultation or prior notice to Parishioners.

3. Membership of the Council:

- 3.1 The Parish Priest and one other member of the Carmelite Community will be permanent members of the Council and will have a vote. The remainder of the Council will be as follows:
- 3.2 The Chair of the Council, appointed by the Parish Priest.

- 3.3 The Chair of the Finance Committee, also appointed by the Parish Priest.
- 3.4 The advisor on Health and Safety for the Parish.
- 3.5 The advisor on Safeguarding for the Parish.
- 3.6 Elected members, representing each of the Activity Groups (see 4.1 below).
- 3.7 Co-opted members, appointed either for their expertise in given disciplines or their involvement in specific projects for the Parish.
- 3.8 A minute/administration secretary, who will have no vote, will be appointed by the Chair of the Council.
- 3.9 All appointments will be authorised or have the approval and endorsement of the Parish Priest. Membership of the Council should be kept to 13 or, at the very most, a maximum of 15.

4. Elections and Appointments:

- 4.1 Volunteer Working Groups will choose their own Team Leaders who will represent them on their Activity Group.
- 4.2 Team Leaders will elect the chair of their Activity Group who, with the approval and endorsement of the Parish Priest, will have a seat on the Parish Council, as one of the elected members. Should the Parish Priest, for whatever reason, consider the elected member unsuitable to serve on the Council, the Parish Priest will appoint a suitable replacement.
- 4.3 The Parish Priest and/or members of the Council may nominate Parishioners with special skills, or who are involved in specific Parish projects, to join the Council as co-opted members. All those nominated, must have the approval of the Parish Priest before being invited to join the Council.
- 4.4 The Chair of the Council will be appointed by the Parish Priest.
- 4.5 The Vice Chair will be nominated, seconded, voted upon and appointed by the Council.
- 4.6 The Secretary, who will have no vote, will be appointed by the Chair of the Council.

5. Sub-Committees:

- 5.1 The Parish Priest may, on occasion, wish to appoint, or ask the Council to appoint a sub-group or a specialist, to work on a specific project for the Parish. All such appointments will be directed by and will report to the Parish Priest or the Chair of the Council and will present their final report to the Council.

6. Term of Appointments:

- 6.1 All elected Council members will serve for a period of three years, at the end of which, they may stand for a second term. No Elected member will serve for more than two consecutive terms on the Council without a break of 3 years after which they may be re-considered for re-appointment/election. Members of the Council who are appointed by the Parish Priest will serve until, at the discretion of the Parish Priest, a replacement is made.
- 6.2 Should any member wish or need to resign from the Council within their term of office, they must give the Chair and the Parish Priest notice in writing, stating the reason for their resignation, at least one month before the effective date, so that a replacement can either be found, elected or co-opted.
- 6.3 The Parish Priest and Council shall have the power to request the immediate resignation of any member, including the Chair of the Council, deemed to have acted against the best interests of the Parish, or to have put at risk the reputation or well-being of the Church. Before such action can be taken however, the member concerned must be given the opportunity of a hearing before the full Council, following which the member shall be asked to leave the meeting so that the Council can discuss the case and, if necessary, vote on any action to be taken. The Council's decision will be confirmed in writing to the member.

7. Parish Council Meetings:

- 7.1 Meetings will normally be held once every two months, i.e. six each year. Emergency meetings may be called should the need arise or should there be insufficient time to deal with all agenda items on the scheduled meeting. Members unable to attend must give their apologies to the Secretary before the meeting and, if appropriate, submit a brief written report on their activities since the previous meeting.
- 7.2 A quorum, consisting of the Parish Priest or his representative, the Chair or Vice-Chair and a minimum of five other members will be required in order to hold an official meeting of the Council.
- 7.3 The Secretary will call for Agenda items two weeks before a scheduled meeting and send out the agenda agreed by the Chair and Parish Priest one week prior to the meeting.
- 7.4 Minutes of meetings will be produced as soon as practicable thereafter. A summary of items agreed, actions taken or to be taken will be produced and posted on the notice boards of all three churches in the Parish and on the website.

8. Annual General Meeting (AGM):

- 8.1 Once each year, normally in September/October, the Council will hold an AGM that will be open to all Parishioners. At this meeting, the Parish Priest and the Chair of the Council will give a comprehensive report to Parishioners on the state of the Parish, including a financial report, activities during the past year and an outlook for the year ahead.
- 8.2 The date of the AGM will be announced four Sundays before and the agenda for the meeting will be posted on all Church notice boards seven days before the meeting.
- 8.3 Parishioners will be free to suggest specific matters for Any Other Business. Such requests must be submitted in writing to the Chair at the very latest, 14 days before the meeting and will be considered for inclusion on the agenda by the Chair of the Council.
- 8.4 Due to a full agenda and/or limited time, the inclusion of all requested matters for the agenda will be at the discretion of the Chair. Should there be insufficient time to include extra items, or should the Chair consider it inappropriate to include any item on the agenda, a written response on the item concerned will be provided by the Chair to the Parishioner.
- 8.5 Depending on time available and, at the discretion of the Chair, relevant questions from the floor will be accepted. However, should an answer to such questions need further research outside the meeting; the Chair will provide a written response to the Parishioner as soon as practicable, following the AGM. Parishioners who may wish to table questions in writing, must do so, at the very latest, 48 hours before the meeting. Answers to as many tabled questions as possible will be given at the meeting. A written response will be sent to those Parishioners whose questions could not be dealt with at the AGM.

9. Amendments to the Constitution:

- 9.1 Once agreed by the Parish Priest and the full Council, this Constitution will come into force immediately and will be posted on the Parish web site.
- 9.2 Amendments to the Constitution proposed or requested in writing to the Chair of the Council, will only be considered if there is unanimous support from the Council for any such proposal or from a minimum of twenty five Parishioners. No changes may be made to the Constitution without the approval of the Parish Priest and the unanimous agreement of the whole Council. Any amendments agreed will be announced and put into effect at the following AGM.

*St Joseph's Parish Council
February 2017*