

Guidelines for our Parish Pastoral Council

1. PARISH VISION & MISSION

OUR VISION

"An inclusive, welcoming and dynamic faith-filled Catholic community, living and sharing the Gospel, to set the world ablaze."

OUR MISSION

To achieve our Parish Vision, we will:

- *Energetically rejoice in and openly express our faith.*
- *Warmly welcome everyone, and nurture and foster greater involvement.*
- *Enthusiastically celebrate the Eucharist.*
- *Actively immerse ourselves in the life of our Parish activities.*
- *Joyfully proclaim the Gospel of Christ.*
- *Compassionately serve the needs of others.*
- *Lovingly cultivate and strengthen fraternal bonds in our Parish Community.*
- *Inspire, motivate and empower people as parish leaders.*

2. ROLE

- a. Our Pastoral Council's role is to participate in God's mission to live and communicate the love and values of Christ in the world around us.
- b. Our Pastoral Council shares in the responsibility for the ongoing life and development of our parish community, working together with parishioners to provide support for their efforts to live as followers of Christ.
- c. Our Parish Pastoral Council seeks to:
 - i. Listen and respond to the hopes, ideas, needs and concerns of parishioners.
 - ii. Generate responses to these identified issues.
 - iii. Encourage and support the continuing good work of existing groups within our parish.
 - iv. Provide opportunities for parishioners:
 - A. to grow in their relationship with God and with each other
 - B. to support and encourage them in their continuing efforts to be a Christian influence in the wider community.
 - v. Set realistic and achievable short-term and long-term pastoral goals for our parish community.
 - vi. Oversee the implementation of these goals.
 - vii. Contribute towards making parish decisions that reflect the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.
 - viii. Provide support for our Pastor, working collaboratively with him and with each other.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- a. There will be fourteen (14) members, being Parishioners chosen by fellow parishioners. In addition to the Parish Priest and Assistant Priests (if any), ex-officio members may include the Parish Deacon (if any), Pastoral Associate (if any), Principal/s of the Parish School/s and a member of the Finance Committee.
- b. The Council will aim to have as broad a membership as possible, with a diversity of age, gender and ethnic origin.
- c. Each Pastoral Councillor is a representative of the whole parish community and not a representative of a specific parish group only.
- d. There will be a session of formation for all Council members prior to the first meeting of the newly chosen Council and after each changeover of membership.

4. TERM OF MEMBERSHIP

- a. The term of membership is two years.
- b. To facilitate continuity, it is anticipated that approximately half the Pastoral Council members will choose to continue for a second term by renomination.
- c. Anyone who serves two terms consecutively will then stand down for at least one term.

5. NEW MEMBERS

- a. All parishioners will be asked to nominate other parish members for possible membership of the Council.
- b. Each person nominated will be invited either to a combined Information Meeting or to an individual meeting with a Pastoral Councillor, to receive current information about Pastoral Councils. At the conclusion of this meeting, those nominated will be asked to indicate whether they wish to accept or decline the nomination.
- c. If the number of accepted nominations exceeds the Council vacancies, the membership will be finalised by either negotiation or a prayerful selection process or election by the Parishioners.

6. CASUAL VACANCIES

- a. The Council may fill any casual vacancy by invitation from the Parish Priest after consultation with the Parish Community. Prior to joining the Council, the proposed candidates will receive a short briefing on responsibilities and expectations as a member.
- b. After completing the remainder of the current term of membership for this casual vacancy, the new member will be eligible for recommendation for a second term.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

In a spirit of prayerfulness each member of the Parish Pastoral Council will:

- a. Attend the regular meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- b. Provide input to deliberations of the Council.
- c. Develop a spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen and understand the issues affecting the lives of parishioners.
- d. Provide prayerful support and encouragement for other members of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- e. Actively participate in the implementation of finalised plans of action.**
- f. Embrace opportunities for personal faith development and for gaining skills to assist with effective participation in the Council's operations.
- g. Represent the Parish Pastoral Council when required (e.g. other Parish meetings, deanery or diocesan meetings).

8. OFFICE BEARERS (Executive)

- a. The Parish Priest, Parish Assistant Priest/s (if any) plus office-bearers will form the executive of the Pastoral Council.
- b. The office-bearers, elected by the Council Members, will be Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary.
- c. If the membership of the Council changes to the extent that any current office bearer was previously elected by Council members who now make up less than 50% of the current Council numbers, that office will be declared vacant and an election for that office will be conducted. The vacating office bearer is eligible to be nominated.

9. MEETINGS

- a. There will be a minimum of ten monthly meetings of the Pastoral Council each year.
- b. Two of the Pastoral Council meetings will accommodate the following:-
 - i. In the 1st half of the year, coordinators of each Parish Ministry will be invited to attend a designated Pastoral Council meeting to discuss and consider Pastoral Matters.
 - ii. In the 2nd half of the year, one designated Pastoral Council meeting will be open to any member of the Parish to attend and participate.
- c. Meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council or Task Groups will not commence unless there is a quorum of members present. For the Parish Pastoral Council, the quorum will be 75% of the current PPC membership (rounded down) excluding the Parish Priest and ex-officio members. For Task Groups, it is a minimum of 50% of the number of appointed members of that Task Group.
- d. Meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council or the Parish Pastoral Council Executive will not take place without the Parish Priest being present.

10. TASK GROUPS

- a. Task groups may be set up under the auspices of the Pastoral Council for specific purposes and will provide a written report to each PPC meeting.
- b. Task Groups must include one member of the Parish Pastoral Council, who ideally would chair the Task Group.

11. DECISIONS

- a. As far as possible, the consensus approach will be used in the process of contributing towards the making of parish decisions, with each member offering input towards the final outcome. Where consensus is not achieved and a decision is required, a majority of total PPC membership (excluding ex-officio members) is needed.
- b. Majority voting, lobbying, competition and domination are to be avoided.
- c. All members of the Council are bound to support any decision made by the Council and communicate the decision to all parishioners as the position of the Council regardless of prior personal opinion or position, before or after the decision.

12. COMMUNICATION WITH THE PARISH

- a. The Pastoral Council will report to the parish community regularly.
- b. It will seek the input of parishioners through various means, e.g. parish consultations, focus meetings, conversations.
- c. The Pastoral Council, while providing support and encouragement to existing parish groups, does not have specific or directive role in the life of those groups. Parish groups are accountable to the Parish Priest, or his representative, not to the Pastoral Council. The same applies with parish pastoral staff or team while still maintaining effective avenues of communication.

13. REVIEW OF GUIDELINES

- a. These Pastoral Council Guidelines will be reviewed at the end of each Pastoral Council's term, or more frequently if the need arises.
- b. Consultation with the Parish community will occur regarding any changes to these Guidelines.

APPENDIX

ROLE STATEMENTS FOR OFFICE BEARERS

14. ROLE OF CHAIRPERSON

- a. Meet with other members of the executive to prepare an agenda for each regular meeting of the Council, incorporating input from all pastoral councillors.
- b. Study the agenda carefully before each meeting, gathering any information that might be relevant to the topics named.
- c. In chairing each meeting of the Council, the chairperson will:
 - i. Include significant time for prayer and formation at meetings for the Christian focus these provide and the faith development that results.
 - ii. Maintain the pastoral focus of the Council, e.g.:
 1. encourage involvement of all members
 2. see that the practices of attentive listening and questioning for clarification continue
 3. ensure that there is respect for each person's opinions.
 4. Monitor the time-frame of each agenda item.
 - iii. Work collaboratively to set realistic short-term and long-term goals for the Pastoral Council.
 - iv. Ensure there are outcomes for each agenda item.

Possibilities for action:

 1. actually recommend a decision and help plan its implementation
 2. share the tasks of implementation among all pastoral councillors
 3. assign one or more people to search out additional information on appropriate agenda items
 4. communicate with parishioners/parish groups, seeking comments or assistance
 5. invite each councillor to ask at least five other parishioners for their ideas or responses in relation to a specified topic
 6. include the issue in the Prayers of Intercession.

Note: *The continued action of placing the issue under discussion on to next month's agenda without doing anything else is not considered a helpful response. Such an approach usually results in growing frustration for participants as they see that "Nothing's happening."*

- d. Other duties:
 - i. Ensure that there is ongoing liaison with the Parish Priest.
 - ii. Provide encouragement and support for Council members.
 - iii. Encourage the participation of all pastoral councillors in working on projects and tasks.
 - iv. Ensure that there is regular communication with parishioners to inform them of the work of the Council, including regular updates on important projects.
 - v. Encourage input from parishioners about their hopes, ideas, needs and concerns.
 - vi. Liaise with archdiocesan agencies between meetings as required.

- vii. Represent the parish at deanery/diocesan meetings as required.

15. ROLE OF DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

- a. Attend meetings of the executive.
- b. Provide encouragement and support for the chairperson.
- c. Assist the chairperson in conducting the Pastoral Council's work.
- d. Perform the duties of the chairperson in the latter's absence.

16. ROLE OF SECRETARY

- a. Provide for the recording of the minutes of regular and special meetings of the Council.
- b. Arrange for the necessary meeting place and the resources appropriate for the meeting.
- c. Attend to inward and outward correspondence.
- d. Distribute information and correspondence to Council members and to parish groups as required.
- e. Keep a file of records of the Council's minutes, decisions, history, membership and development.
- f. Liaise with diocesan agencies when required, e.g. advise details of any change of office bearers.

17. ROLE OF EXECUTIVE

- a. Take responsibility for the preparation and distribution of the Agenda, minutes and all relevant material for each meeting, using input from pastoral councillors and parishioners.
- b. Ensure that all meeting documentation is distributed at least one week prior to the next meeting.
- c. Oversee the development of proposals for consideration by the Pastoral Council.
- d. Reflect on the effectiveness of the previous Pastoral Council meeting (e.g. What went well? What can we do better?).
- e. Conduct the business of the Pastoral Council between meetings.
- f. Represent the Pastoral Council as required.
- g. Arrange additional formation opportunities outside regular meetings.

MISCELLANEOUS

18. DEFINITION

A "Parishioner" in the context of Parish Pastoral Council elections or nominations, is defined as

- a person who is 18 years of age or older and
- worships regularly at St Catherine of Siena Parish Caroline Springs and
- is listed on the Parish Register.

19. CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS (OFFICE BEARERS)

- a. The Parish Priest will be the Electoral Officer and Arbiter, utilising any independent assistance he deems necessary. The Parish Priest will call for nominations for the offices specifying a closing date and time. The actual election process will be conducted under his supervision.
- b. If there is only one nomination for an office, the candidate will be declared elected unopposed.
- c. If there are two nominations for an office, a ballot will be conducted amongst the PPC members in attendance. The candidate receiving the most votes will be declared elected. In the event of a tied vote, each candidate will be given the opportunity to talk to the gathered PPC members and a revote will be taken.
- d. If there are more than two nominations for an office, a ballot will be conducted amongst the PPC members in attendance. The candidate receiving the lowest number of votes will be withdrawn from further consideration and another ballot conducted for the remaining candidates – this continues until only two candidates remain then reverts to point 20b. In the event of a tie in the lowest number of votes, a ballot will be conducted between just those tied candidates and the candidate with the highest votes will advance to the next round.

LOG OF CHANGES

- 7/02/2019 At this date, these guidelines are the result of a complete review by a Task Group of Father Richard Rosse, Pat Gurrie (chair), Dawn Quintal & Anson Pereira in a series of meetings (October 2018 to February 2019). Proposed changes were submitted to monthly Parish Pastoral Council meetings during that period and were discussed, approved and agreed to. All future changes will be logged on an individual basis.
- 10/4/2019 These guidelines were formally adopted at the Parish Pastoral Council meeting held on this day. This action followed a 30 day period (expiring 31/3/2019) where they had been displayed on the notice board and the website inviting comment or feedback from Parishioners. As there had been no comment or feedback received, the guidelines were proposed for adoption.