

Our Lady and the English Martyrs

The Standing Orders of the Council of the community worshipping at the church on Hills Road.

1. Name

- 1.1. The council shall be called The Community Council of the faithful at Our Lady and the English Martyrs on Hills Road, hereafter abbreviated as 'the Community Council' or 'the Council' in this document.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. In considering, consulting and recommending activities within this community, we share co-responsibility with the people of the parish and the parish priest for discerning God's path for us, growing in faith, love and service as we organise our activities. To help us to do this, we seek to recognise and affirm people's gifts; encouraging and supporting those of our Eucharistic community to participate in the Body of Christ, and so serving each other, our neighbours and the wider world.
- 2.2. Our Community Council shares the dispersed function of the Parish Council as one of five communities that together comprise the Parish of Our Lady and the English Martyrs.

3. The membership of the Community Council shall comprise:

Voting Members

- 3.1.1. There shall be 12 elected or appointed members of the worshipping community, each of whom shall have a vote.
- 3.1.2. A member's term of office is three years.
- 3.1.3. A member is entitled to seek re-election after their first term of office.
- 3.1.4. After two terms of office, a member must not stand for election to the Council again for the length of their first term of office.

Co-option of voting members

- 3.2.1. Additional voting members may be co-opted to fill vacant seats.
- 3.2.2. The President of the Community Council may co-opt members (but not exceeding 12 voting members) on the recommendation of the Council.

3.3. Non voting membership will also be reserved for three 'office holders':

- 3.3.1. A member of the finance committee will be co-opted to the Council, primarily there to inform and advise the council.

- 3.3.2.** A member of staff will attend the Council. Who attends which meeting will be decided among the staff in response to the agenda of that meeting, primarily there to inform and advise the council.
- 3.3.3.** The parish priest will attend and preside over the council and receive recommendations of the council, so he will not have a vote in the Community Council.
- 3.3.4.** In his absence, the parish priest may send a delegate.

3.4. Observers

- 3.4.1.** Specific members of the parish or guests may be invited by the Chairperson to attend a meeting of the Community Council, in part or wholly, from time to time. They may be invited to speak to a specific item, to the meeting, or observe without speaking.
- 3.4.2.** Other members of clergy at Our Lady and the English Martyrs are invited as speaking observers, to advise us and share the council's responsibility.
- 3.4.3.** Members of the community may submit applications to observe any particular meeting. Applications should be received before the meeting. Applications are accepted by the discretion of the Chairperson.
- 3.4.4.** Along with presentation of those present and apologies, the minutes should also note who attended as observers and if any, whose application to observe a meeting was not accepted.

3.5. Officers of the Council

3.5.1. *Appointment of council office holders*

The positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary are to be chosen from among the members of the Council, by the Council, through recommendation to the President.

3.5.2. *Senior Advisors*

The Chairperson, the Secretary, the Vice Chairperson and one other may be appointed by the President as 'senior advisors' to the Parish Priest.

3.5.3 *President's role and responsibilities*

The Parish Priest has been entrusted with the care of the parish by the bishop. As president of the council, he encourages the community council to have a pastoral, whole community perspective on what they are about and to plan ahead; ensures there is ongoing formation for the group; sets the agenda with the Chairperson, Secretary and Vice Chairperson; gives direction where necessary; receives recommendations from the council, accepting them, asking for clarity, asking for reconsideration, and retaining the capacity to veto decisions of the Council; he also maintains the connection between this Council and other communities of the parish, the diocese and the wider Catholic Church.

3.5.4. *Chairperson's role and responsibilities*

The Chairperson is primarily responsible for setting the agenda with the parish priest and facilitating the meetings in order to ensure that the tasks of the council are fulfilled. The role includes, encouraging the participation of all members during the meeting; ensuring sufficient time is given to prayer and reflection; monitoring the time and making sure all agenda items are addressed and discussed.

The Chairperson should significantly reduce any other responsible role they have within the parish to enhance their ability to serve the Community Council.

3.5.5. Secretary

The secretary is responsible for keeping a record of the progress of the Community Council, for circulating relevant material to council members, and for informing members of the community about the activities and recommendations of the Community Council. They will prepare the agenda with the chairperson and the parish priest, distributing the minutes and agenda to the council members before the meeting, receiving notification of absences, keeping a record of the council's minutes and recommendations, promoting the work of the council within the community and the parish.

3.5.6. Vice-chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson will deputise for the Chairperson and assist in preparing the agenda with the Chairperson, Secretary and Parish Priest.

3.6. Election of voting members to the Community Council

3.6.1. Any Catholic who has been confirmed and regularly worships at Our Lady and the English Martyrs (Hills Road) is eligible to stand for election to the Community Council.

3.6.2. Upon election to the Community Council, any office holder within the parish, paid or unpaid (i.e. member of the finance committee) must stand down from this office.

3.6.3. Schedule of elections

3.6.3.1. Four seats on the council are open for election each year.

3.6.3.2. The seat vacated by a member following their resignation is carried for the term of office, rather than creating a by-election, although another member may be co-opted.

3.6.4. Interim measures

Interim measures are required for the first elections and for the first term of an elected member of the Community Council. These are:

- i. At the first meeting of the council, members will draw lots to determine their terms of office (one, two, and three years).
- ii. As per the standing orders of the Community Council, members are permitted to stand for a second term of office.
- iii. After serving a second term, members must not stand for a term of office equal to the period of their first term of office. (Thus a member who has served two terms of one year plus three years is not permitted to stand for one year).
- iv. If a member resigns without fulfilling their term of office and held a term that was longer than that of others as selected by the drawing of lots, those members who were due to serve a term of a lesser duration and their seat is due to be vacated that year may, by agreement or again drawing of lots, determine who takes the seat (and term of office) vacated by the member who has resigned.

3.6.5. Resigning from the Community Council

- 3.6.5.1. If a member resigns from the Community Council, their seat is held for the duration of that term i.e. there is not a by-election.
- 3.6.5.2. Members may be co-opted to the Community Council so to fill a vacant seat.
- 3.6.5.3. In certain circumstances it may be deemed that a member has relinquished their seat, for instance if they have missed three successive meetings of the Council. In such instances, following the recommendation of the Council, the President may request that they resign from the Council. In such instances, their membership is deemed to be suspended pending appeal through the right of recourse.

4. Meetings of the Community Council

- 4.1.1 The Community Council will meet at least four times per year.
- 4.1.2. It is expected that the Community Council will meet six times per year, on a bi-monthly basis.
- 4.1.3. The quorum of the Community Council be '50 per cent of voting members, plus one'. E.g. seven from 12 voting members.

4.2. Open meetings of the Community Council

- 4.2.1. The name of the open 'community in council' meetings shall hereafter be known as Community Meeting.
- 4.2.2. The quorum of a Community Meeting will be 50.
- 4.2.3. There should be at least two Community Meetings each year, one of which is an Annual General Meeting.
- 4.2.4. The Community Council will hold at least one annual Community Meeting, equivalent to an Annual General Meeting, in which its business will be reviewed by the community.
- 4.2.5. The Community Council may call additional Community Meetings; an open meeting of the Community which any member of the community may attend. These meetings are the equivalent of an Emergency General Meeting, intended for the purpose of involving the community in considering and investigating a specific matter.

4.3. Setting the agenda

- 4.3.1. The agenda is to be agreed by the Chairperson, Secretary, Vice Chairperson and President and published before each meeting of the Community Council and/or Community Meeting.
- 4.3.2. Any member of the Council, including those office holders whose places are reserved, may propose items for the agenda.
- 4.3.3 Any member of the parish may propose items for the agenda.

4.4. Council of Councils

We recognise that the formation of a Council of Councils will have implications for the function and format of this Community Council. Our standing orders should be amended to reflect whatever standing orders are agreed for the Council of Councils.

4.5. Voting

- 4.5.1.** The meeting will seek consensus, but there will be occasions where a decision is put to the vote to ascertain the direction of consensus.
- 4.5.2.** The chairperson of that meeting, usually the Council's Chairperson, will have the casting vote.

4.6. Agenda and minutes of the meeting

- 4.6.1.** The Secretary shall publish the agenda of the Community Council in the parish bulletin for two weeks preceding the meeting.
- 4.6.2.** A record of the meeting will be kept and published on the church noticeboard.
- 4.6.3.** An explanatory note of a meeting of the Community Council will be published in the parish bulletin within fourteen days of the meeting.

4.7. Confidentiality

- 4.7.1.** It should be assumed that all contributions in a meeting are not attributed to an individual, unless this clause is specifically lifted (by that individual).
- 4.7.2.** Some matters may be strictly confidential, in which case it should be clearly stated, and so reflected in the minutes.

5. Representation of the pastoral aspects of Community Life

- 5.1.** Candidates standing for election to the council should, in their nomination:
 - 5.1.1.** State two aspects of community life* in which they have a particular interest.
 - 5.1.2.** Declare any particular interests including positions they currently hold or have previously held within the parish, the diocese, community and wider church.
- 5.2.** The Community Council, in their first meeting following elections to the council, should allocate responsibilities for the six identified aspects of community life among members of the council (as portfolio holders).
 - 5.2.1.** There should be a maximum of two members with such allocated responsibility for working with any single aspect of community life*.
 - 5.2.2.** Any single member of the community council should be responsible for no more than two aspects of community life*.
- 5.3.** ***Recognised aspects of community life** shall be:
 - 5.3.1.** Liturgy & Worship
 - 5.3.2.** Formation & Evangelisation
 - 5.3.3.** Pastoral Care & Social Activities

5.3.4. Community Care & Charity

5.3.5. Communication

5.3.6. Fabric & Facilities

6. Right of recourse

6.1. If the council disagrees with the decision of the parish priest, and this matter cannot be resolved locally, it has right of recourse. In the first instance, in accordance with diocesan policy, the council may appeal to the area dean and subsequently to the vicar general and to the bishop.

7. Amendments to the Standing Orders

7.1. Amendments to the Standing Orders shall require a simple majority of the Community Meeting, and the agreement of the Parish Priest.

7.2. The standing orders shall be reviewed every three years to evaluate their effectiveness and ensure they remain relevant to the needs of the parish and the community in the light of diocesan policies.

8. Dissolution of the Community Council

If, in the judgement of the Bishop or of the Parish Priest (always with the agreement of the Dean and Bishop), the Council ceases to operate in the best interests of the parish, the Council and its standing orders will be temporarily suspended by the Parish Priest. The Council will then be reconstituted within 12 months of any such suspension.

End note:

The Standing Orders were amended for typing and grammatical errors on 07.10.2014 and 25.11.2014. The word 'how' was removed from 2.1 after the Community Meeting. Members of the Community Council on 25.11.2014, changed 'advice the council' to 'advise the council' in 3.3.1 and 3.3.2; and changed 'e.g.' to 'i.e.' in 3.6.2.