**Our Lady and the English Martyrs**

**The Standing Orders of the Council of the community 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 several communities that together comprise the Parish. Its responsibility is to advise and assist the Parish Priest on matters pertaining to Our Lady and the English Martyrs. It is not an executive body.

**3. The membership of the Community** **Council** shall comprise:

# Voting Members

**3.1.1.** There shall be 12 elected or appointed members of the worshiping 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 one year.

# Co-option of voting members

**3.2.1.** Additional voting members may be co-opted to fill vacant seats.

**3.2.2.** The Chairperson of the Community Council may co-opt members (but not exceeding 12 voting members) on the recommendation of the Council. A member who has served two consecutive terms should not be appointed to the council until a year has elapsed.

## 3.3. Parish Priest

The Parish Priest has been entrusted with the care of the parish by the bishop. The parish priest will attend the council and receive recommendations of the council. In his absence, he may send a delegate. He sets the agenda with the Chairperson, Secretary, Vice Chairperson and Deputy Secretary; gives direction where necessary and receives recommendations from the council. He does not have to accept the

recommendations of the Council. He also maintains the connection between this

Council and other communities of the parish, the diocese and the wider Catholic Church.

## 3.4. 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 and should be submitted to the Chairperson through the OLEM Parish Office. Applications are accepted at 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, if any, and 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, Secretary and Deputy Secretary are to be chosen from among the members of the Council, by the Council, through recommendation to the Parish Priest.

### 3.5.2. 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.

### 3.5.3. 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 prepare the agenda with the chairperson and the parish priest, ensure bookings of meeting rooms are made in time, distribute the minutes and agenda to the council members before the meeting, receive notification of absences, keep a record of the council’s minutes and recommendations.

**3.5.4. *Vice-chairperson***

The Vice-Chairperson will deputise for and assist the Chairperson.

**3.5.5. *Deputy Secretary***

The Deputy Secretary will deputise for and assist the Secretary.

## 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 Council.

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

### 3.6.3. Schedule of elections

Four seats on the council are open for election each year. 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. Resigning from the Community Council

If a member resigns from the Community Council, their seat is held for the duration of that term. There is not a by-election. Members may be co-opted to the Community Council to fill a vacant seat. 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 Parish Priest 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.

### 3.6.5. Safeguarding

In the event of a minor being elected or appointed to the Council, the Parish Priest shall liaise with the designated safeguarding personnel to ensure every member of the Council has the relevant DBS clearance. If this is not obtainable for a member of the Council, they must resign with immediate effect.

# 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.

**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. Agenda, Actions and Accountability

**4.2.1.** The agenda is to be agreed by the Officers and Parish Priest.

**4.2.2.** Any member of the Council may propose items for the agenda.

**4.2.3.** Any member of the parish may propose items for the agenda by notifying any Council member, who should bring the matter to the attention of the Officers.

**4.2.4.** Agenda items addressed by the Council that require agreed actions shall be documented using the template in Appendix 1. The resulting log of actions shall be made available at the Open Meetings and on request to members of the parish.

## 4.3. Council of Councils

In the event of the formation of a Council of Councils (with other communities within the Parish) these standing orders should be amended appropriately.

## 4.4. Voting at Community Council

**4.4.1.** Meetings will seek consensus, but there will be occasions where a decision is put to the vote to ascertain the direction of consensus.

**4.4.2.** The chairperson of that meeting, usually the Council’s Chairperson, will have the casting vote.

## 4.5. Agenda and minutes of the meeting

**4.5.1.** The Secretary will arrange for the agenda of the Community Council to be displayed on the Noticeboard and the Website.

**4.5.2.** Minutes of themeeting will be kept.

**4.5.3.** A note of a meeting of the Community Council will be published in the parish bulletin within fourteen days of the meeting.

## 4.6. Confidentiality

**4.6.1.** Published notes of a meeting will not include statements attributed to an individual, unless this clause is specifically lifted (by that individual).

**4.6.2.** Some mattersmay be strictly confidential, in which case it should be clearly stated.

## 4.7. Open meetings of the Community Council

**4.7.1.** The name of the open 'community in council' meetings shall hereafter be known as the Open Meetings.

**4.7.2.** There should be at least two Open Meetings each year, one of which will be equivalent to an Annual General Meeting, in which its business will be reviewed by the community. Members of the Parish are encouraged to attend. The Open Meetings will be advertised at least one month in advance in the Bulletin.

**4.7.3.** The Community Council may call additional Community Meetings. These meetings are the equivalent of an Emergency General Meeting, intended for the purpose of involving the community in considering a specific matter.

**4.7.5.** The Community Council will set the agenda for the Open Meetings in agreement with the Parish Priest.

# 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 an aspect of community life in which they have a particular interest.

**5.1.2.** Declare particular interests including positions they currently hold or have previously held within the parish, the diocese, and wider Church.

**5.2.** The Community Council, in their first meeting following elections, should allocate responsibilities for the four identified aspects of community life among members of the council (as portfolio holders). There should ordinarily be one officer and two other members with such allocated responsibility for each of the following aspects of community life:

**5.2.1.** Social Activities

This includes helping to organise and publicise social events that support the life of the Parish, for example those pertaining to important feasts for the Community.

**5.2.2.** Evangelisation and Formation

This includes activities that will contribute to the formation and evangelisation of both adults and children in the Parish. Any member of the Council who may come into contact with children must have the relevant DBS clearance first.

**5.2.3.** Communication and Parish Directory

This includes updating the Website and Social Media, ensuring activities of the Council are suitably recorded and advertised, and liaising closely with Office staff.

**5.2.4.** Welcoming.

This includes welcoming those attending the Divine Office and welcoming new members of the community.

**5.3** Although there is special responsibility allocated to each of these aspects of community life, these categories are not rigid. Members of the council will work with each other, the clergy and the community to achieve aims set out in agreement with the parish priest. Members of the council should work in concert with the parish priest and should seek to clarify matters with him before undertaking any significant initiatives. Matters concerning the dignity of the sacraments are reserved to the parish priest.

# 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. As outlined in section 3.3, the Parish Priest is not obliged to accept recommendations of the Council.

# 7. Amendments to the Standing Orders

**7.1.** Substantial amendments to the Standing Orders shall require a simple majority of an Open 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, unless decided otherwise by the Bishop.