



CONSTITUTION of the Parish Council of St.Mary, Mother of God, Hornchurch

Last Revised: Annual Parish Meeting, 24th June 1999



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a Parish Council is to discuss and plan the whole life, work and worship of the parish.

The Council should be advisory, helping and assisting the Parish Priest with the organising of the social, financial, spiritual and liturgical life of the parish.

CONSTITUTION

1. CHAIRMAN - The Chairman of the Parish Council is a lay person who will be elected annually by the Parish Council from within its membership at the first Council Meeting after the Annual Parish Meeting.
2. The Chairman will assist the Parish Priest in the running of the Parish Council Meeting.
3. SECRETARY - The Secretary is appointed by the Parish Council; approved minutes should be published in the Newsletter or in the Church Porch.
4. MEMBERS
 - a) The Clergy of the Parish and Parish Sister are *ex officio* members of the Parish Council.
 - b) The Headteacher of the Parish School, the Parish Master of Ceremonies, the Parish Secretary, the Editor(s) of the Parish Newsletter and the Brentwood Diocesan Pastoral Council representative are *ex officio* members of the Parish Council.
 - c) In addition to these *ex officio* members there will be twelve elected members, all of whom must live in the parish or frequently attend the Church and must be at least 18 years of age. If any member resigns during his time in office, another person may be co-opted in his place for the remainder of his term.
5. ELECTED MEMBERS - Members will be elected by ballot at the Annual Parish Meeting to serve for two years. An elected member may not serve for more than four consecutive years. A councillor who is absent from three consecutive meetings shall be considered to have resigned.
6. CO-OPTED MEMBERS - The Parish Council shall have the power to co-opt members. Co-opted members shall have the same right to vote at Council Meetings as the other members. All co-opted members retire at the Annual Parish Meeting following their co-option and may be re-co-opted at the discretion of the Council. Co-opted members may be under 18 years of age.
7. PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS - The Parish Council shall meet at least six times a year. The Parish Priest and the Chairman shall agree time and place of the next meeting which will be published in the Newsletter. All meetings of the Council shall be open meetings. Non-members may attend but may not vote.



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8. WORKING PARTIES - The Parish Council may set up working parties for any purpose and with any membership; the chairman of a working party must be a member of the Parish Council and must report back to the Parish Council. Their first report must be in writing.

9. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - The Annual Parish Meeting will be held at a time and place determined by the Parish Council, to discuss and adopt the Annual Report, to elect councillors for the following year, and to discuss any other matters on the agenda.

The Annual Parish Financial Statement will be published, preferably in the Newsletter, a week before the Annual Parish Meeting.

Notice calling the meeting will be given from the pulpit and inserted in the Newsletter.

Nominations must be made during the month prior to the Annual Parish Meeting.

10. EXTRAORDINARY PARISH MEETING - An Extraordinary Parish Meeting may be called by the Parish Council giving not less than two weeks notice in the Newsletter.

11. QUORUM - At a Parish Meeting, twenty people form a quorum. At a meeting of the Parish Council at least six of the *ex officio* or elected members must be present to form a quorum.

12. VOTING

a) Anybody may attend a Parish Meeting. Anybody over the age of 15 who lives in the parish or frequently attends the Church may vote at a Parish Meeting. Voting is normally by show of hands but ballot papers shall be used for elections.

b) At a Parish Council Meeting voting is by show of hands. If voting is equal, the Parish Priest has a casting vote in addition to his personal vote.

13. ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION - A copy of this Constitution will be permanently displayed in the Church Porch. Any proposal to alter this Constitution must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Parish Council so that the text of the alteration is published in the Newsletter not later than 28 days before the Parish Meeting at which it is to be considered (all Parishioners are eligible to attend such meetings). The proposal will be presented by the Parish Council to such Parish Meetings. The majority of two-thirds of those present at that meeting and entitled to vote is required for any alteration to this Constitution.