

## **St. Mary of the Rosary, Forest Hall** **Parish Council Constitution**

The Parish Council is an elected body of parishioners who have a consultative role in the governance of the parish.

### **Purpose of the Council**

The purpose of the Parish Council is:

- To promote the involvement of the parishioners of St Mary's in the life and work of the parish.
- To coordinate the work and growth of the church in four areas, namely Spiritual, Social, Buildings/Maintenance and Finance. These areas will be reviewed at regular intervals.
- To advise the Parish Priest on any point on which he seeks advice.
- To survey regularly any needs referred to them by the Parish Priest and to advise him on satisfying those needs;
- To undertake any work assigned to them by the Parish Priest with their agreement.

### **Responsibilities of the Council**

The responsibilities of the council are:

Mission, worship and formation: The fundamental mission of preaching the Gospel to everyone, celebration of the Sacraments and forming us all in the image of Christ.

Social: For the care and wellbeing of people in all matters not strictly spiritual as well as the development of the community and the co-ordination of fundraising in conjunction with the Parish Finance Committee.

Buildings: Ensure the upkeep, development and maintenance of all properties and assets.

Finance: Review reports and recommendations to/from the Parish Finance Committee.

### **Officers**

The council shall consist of

- President      The parish Priest shall be the president of the council.
- Chairperson    The Chairperson shall be any person elected by the council from among its own members.
- Secretary      The secretary shall be a member of the Parish Council.

No person may hold more than one office on the Parish Council at any one time. The Chairperson and Secretary will be elected at the first full Parish Council meeting after the Annual General Meeting.

### **Election of Chairperson**

The chair shall be elected by the council and serve for a term of 2 years. They may not serve for a period of more than two years.

### **Roles of officers**

- Chairperson      Ensure the orderly conduct of council meetings.  
                          Approve all meeting resolutions.  
                          Approve agendas and draft minutes of meetings before circulation.  
                          Chair all finance and buildings meetings.
- Secretary        Ensure an accurate account of meetings are recorded.

### **Members of the Parish Council**

- The council will consist of up to 10 members and other ex-officio members. Any person may be invited to a meeting of the Parish Council for a legitimate reasons but shall not have voting rights
- Those eligible to be elected shall be those persons aged 16 or over who normally attend Mass in the parish. All parishioners over 16 years are entitled to vote in elections. Elected members will serve for two years, but may offer themselves for re-election.
- A member of the governing body of St Mary's Primary School will be invited to be a member of the Parish Council to ensure links between the Parish and the school.

### **Election of Members**

- Nominations will be requested for parishioners to join the Parish Council four weeks prior to the set date of any election.
- All nominations must be signed by the nominee and their supporter and handed to a member of the Council prior to the closing date.
- The Chairperson/Secretary shall arrange for an election to occur within two weeks of the closing date.
- Should fewer persons come forward for election than there are vacancies, then they shall be elected unopposed.
- If a vacancy occurs during the year, then either
  - a) If an election has occurred in the last year, the result shall be consulted and the unsuccessful candidate with the highest number of votes shall be invited to complete the remaining 2 years of office.
  - b) If no election has occurred, then the Parish Priest /Parish Council may co-opt parishioners to the council.

A vacancy may occur due to the resignation of a member or if a member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without reasonable cause.

### **Responsibilities of Council Members**

Members are expected to

- Exercise leadership.
- Facilitate communication and information
- Represent the views and needs of the parishioners.

## **Voting rights**

Members with voting rights shall be

- The President
- Elected members of the Parish Council
- Ex-officio members (by invitation of the Parish Council)

## **Parish Council Meetings**

- The parish council will meet no less than four times each year.
- At a parish council meeting one half of the members constitute a quorum.
- Voting will be by a show hands of members attending. A secret ballot shall be held for the election of officers and for any other issue where a simple majority of those present request it. If any vote is equal, the Parish Priest shall have the casting vote.

## **Committees**

- The council will ensure that sub committees for Finance and the Fabric (maintenance) of the church are formed and is active.
- Further sub-committees for Mission, Worship and Formation and a Social Committee will be encouraged and supported by the Parish Council.
- The parish council may set up other committees for any purpose.
- All sub committees will be expected to submit a report of their work and progress at each for to the Parish Council meeting.

## **AGM**

- There will be an Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council to every May/June to which all parishioners will be invited to attend.
- Four weeks' notice shall be given of the date of this meeting.
- A report on Parish activities and the work of the Parish Council over the previous year will be given at that meeting and all those present will be invited to participate in any discussion that may take place, to raise issues or to make recommendations.
- Any recommendations from the AGM shall be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting before being ratified.
- A copy of the annual report will be made available to all parishioners within two weeks of the meeting.

## **Alterations to the constitution**

Any proposal to alter this constitution may be considered at a Parish Council meeting after one month's notice has been given to the Parish Council. A majority of two thirds present is required to adopt any such proposal.

**This constitution was adopted at a meeting of the Parish Council on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016.**