



PCC HANDBOOK

A guide to the PCC

ST EBBE'S CHURCH
OXFORD

February 2021

Welcome to the St Ebbe's PCC

Thank you for being willing to serve the church family by being on the Parochial Church Council (PCC). This handbook is intended to give some background information which we hope will be helpful as you settle into your role as PCC member.

1. St Ebbe's Vision

As you will no doubt know, at St Ebbe's we have:

One aim: To see God honoured
Two essentials: The Bible and Prayer
Three goals: To reach out to non-believers
 To build up believers
 To send out Christian workers

All that the PCC does seeks to feed into this vision.

2. The nature and role of the PCC

- a) The PCC is a corporate body, like a limited company, or the governing body of an Oxford college, and unlike a members' club, or an unincorporated trust. So it contracts in its own right and the individual members of the PCC are not personally liable under its contracts, or for its debts.
- b) But the individual members of the PCC do have fiduciary responsibilities: they must act conscientiously, and in good faith, and not in their own interests where those interests might conflict with the interests of the church. Furthermore, the PCC being a charity, the individual members of the PCC are identified by charity law as the 'charity trustees'. This does not convert them into trustees under the general law of trust: but it does mean that they must fulfil the responsibilities which charity legislation imposes on charity trustees.
- c) Charity trustees must:

- i) ensure that the charity is carrying out its objects, and doing so for the public benefit: St Ebbe's' objects are expressed to be: 'promoting in the ecclesiastical parish (of St Ebbe with Holy Trinity and St Peter-le-Bailey) the whole mission of the church';
 - ii) ensure that the charity keeps proper financial records, and prepares annual accounts in a prescribed format;
 - iii) send the Charity Commission an annual return, and keep the charity's entry on the Register of Charities up-to-date;
 - iv) report any serious incidents to the Charity Commission.
- d) It is ecclesiastical law which identifies and defines a PCC, and gives it its status as a corporate body. Under the Parochial Churches Councils (Powers) Measure 1956, the functions of a PCC 'include':
- i) Co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
 - ii) the consideration and discussion of matters concerning the C of E or any other matters of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the Church on any question;
 - iii) making known and putting into effect any provisions made by the diocesan synod or the deanery synod, but without prejudice to the powers of the council on any particular matter;
 - iv) giving advice to the diocesan synod and the deanery synod on any matter referred to the council; and
 - v) raising such matters as the council consider appropriate with the diocesan synod or the deanery synod'.

The word is 'include', and this list is not exhaustive. Other bits of ecclesiastical law add a variety of detailed powers, functions, and responsibilities.

- e) Of particular importance to us is the Faculty jurisdiction. This is in lieu of the listed buildings regime: but it does not provide any exemption from planning controls or Building Regulations. The need for a Faculty from the Diocese must

be considered before any change is made to the fabric of the church; or to the contents of the church; or to the churchyard if any aspect or view of the church would be affected by whatever is contemplated in the churchyard.

- f) Unlike the majority of Anglican churches, a church like St Ebbe's is a substantial business; and it is the PCC which is responsible for running it, in the way that the board of directors is responsible for running the business of a company. So there are many more decisions for our PCC of a business nature than the normal PCC encounters - can we afford to expand in this or that direction: can we prudently recruit or retain these staff etc. - and there is a raft of business and general legislation which becomes relevant to us, and in relation to which compliance is the PCC's responsibility. For example, employment law, minimum wage legislation, health and safety, data protection, fundraising legislation, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and duties attached to the ownership of property.
- g) The Charity Commission publishes an excellent guide - 'The Essential Trustee - What You Need to Know, What You Need to Do'. This is the Commission's publication CC3, and it is to be found on the Commission's website at www.gov.uk. Members of the PCC are asked to study this, and the material on the site more generally, including in particular the '5-minute guides for charity trustees'.

3. Membership of the PCC

- a) The PCC consists of:
- i) all clerks in holy orders beneficed or licensed to the parish;
 - ii) the two churchwardens, chosen annually by a meeting of the parishioners (those whose names are on the electoral roll, and those in the parish who are on the Register of Electors): this meeting takes place on the same day as the Annual Church Meeting (APCM, held in March/April);
 - iii) lay members of the General, diocesan and deanery synods whose names are on the electoral roll;

- iv) elected members; and
 - v) two co-opted members (who can be either clergy or laity).
- b) Others attend by invitation: but they may not vote.
- c) We could have up to 15 elected members: at present we have ten, chosen at the APCM, and in office for three years. Our custom is that they may then be re-elected after a fallow year.

Members of the PCC represent themselves; although they may be asked by congregation members to put views forward. Each member must answer to his or her own conscience and, of course, be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit under Scripture.

An awareness of what is going on in the life of the church will obviously be helpful to members; and it is hoped that they will make every effort to attend Sunday services regularly (although of course there will be exceptional circumstances) and, if possible, the monthly Central Prayer Meetings.

Safeguarding

All PCC Members are required to take the Church of England's 'Basic Awareness' training, which is available online. Churchwardens and Lay Leaders are additionally required to take the 'Foundation' and 'Leadership' training.

4. Meetings

At the APCM the elected PCC members and Deanery Synod representatives are elected by those on the electoral roll. All those standing are proposed and seconded by people on the electoral roll. The APCM also receives annual reports from the PCC, its committees and other groups within the church, and the electoral roll.

Following the APCM, the new PCC usually has an 'Away Day' which is an opportunity for members to get to know one another, spend some time in Bible study and prayer together,

and at which there is time for deeper discussion or reflection on topics of concern.

Through the year there are usually seven or eight PCC meetings in The Pennyfarthing, starting at 7:45pm and aiming to finish by 9:15pm. 'Exceptional meetings' may sometimes have to be called if a time-critical important decision needs to be made, though these are rare.

Wherever possible, members are expected to attend every full meeting of the PCC and to offer their apologies, in advance to the secretary, if they are unable to attend.

All formal decisions, particularly regarding issues such as safeguarding, finance or staffing, require a vote of members present. For each motion a proposer and a seconder are required. All members are asked to vote either in favour or against, or to abstain. The aim on key issues such as these is to introduce the topic at an early stage, allowing time for proper discussion and reflection well in advance of a vote being taken. It is thus hoped that on major issues, votes will be by a clear majority. At least one third of members must be present to transact business (three quarters if the business was not specified in the agenda).

The PCC Secretary takes minutes recording decisions and key elements of discussions. Copies of these, minutes of Standing Committee meetings, an agenda and any other relevant papers will be sent to members (normally via email) at least one week in advance of a meeting. Occasionally circumstances mean papers have to go out later than this but they will always be available to members before the meeting. Minutes of PCC meetings are displayed on the Church notice board and on the St Ebbe's ChurchSuite members section.

At each meeting, there is an opportunity to amend or correct minutes from the previous meeting (at the start of the agenda), and under AOB an opportunity to discuss any 'matters arising' from the minutes of PCC or Standing Committee meetings which have not been covered elsewhere.

5. Standing Committee

Each PCC is required to have a Standing Committee of not less than five persons who must include the Incumbent, the Churchwardens, and two other PCC members. This has power to transact the business of the PCC between the meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC. The Standing Committee is appointed by the PCC each year. Normally at St Ebbe's it is made up of the Rector, the Churchwardens, the Treasurer, the PCC Secretary, and the Associate Minister (Operations).

The Standing Committee meets around three to four weeks in advance of PCC meetings and sets the agenda. It has, on occasion, had an additional meeting in the summer. It will normally be involved in key matters at an early stage. Minutes are taken, which are included with the papers PCC members receive.

6. Conflicts of Interest

To ensure that any decisions made by the PCC are free from accusations of inappropriate motives due to personal or family benefit, the following processes are followed:

a) A register of interests is maintained, noting the people and organisations connected with each person on the register. This is implemented for PCC members and all senior staff and is an open register available for any PCC member to view. The register gives details of any directorships, business interests and trusteeships held by the individual or a close family member.

b) Annual declarations provide any updates to this register. These are completed each year by all PCC members and senior staff between the year end and audit completion. They ask for the related party register to be updated, and for details of any transactions by the charity with any of these parties in the past year.

c) Procedures are in place for trustees to declare any potential conflict of interest, and to withdraw from decisions about these. The first item on the agenda at all meetings of the PCC and its committees is an invitation to members (including staff) to disclose any interest in matters being discussed. The Chair of the meeting must decide whether the individual should absent themselves from all or part of the discussion of the matter concerned. They may not vote on any such decisions. During the meeting, if any member realises they may have such an interest they should disclose it immediately, leaving the Chair to decide as above.

7. Committees of the PCC

The PCC delegates some decisions to committees specialising in particular areas of work. Each committee is chaired by a member of the PCC. The Rector is a member of every committee, ex officio. These committees are formally responsible to the PCC, reporting back to it regularly and seeking its approval for major decisions and budgets. Each committee keeps minutes and notes of its activities: the minutes are circulated with PCC papers. The PCC committees are:

Headington Committee

Chair: *Al Horn*

Remit:

1. To have an overview of the work of St Ebbe's Headington and to advise and support the leader of St Ebbe's Headington. To discuss and comment on administrative, financial, and spiritual matters relating to the work, including:
 - staff appointments
 - pastoral issues
 - buildings
 - programmes (e.g. evangelism, social outreach, teaching).
2. To receive financial reports from the Headington Treasurer.
3. To approve expenditure up to £5,000.

Meeting: around 5-6 times a year.

Membership: three senior staff (currently Al Horn, Leon Catallo, Paul Bolton & Jill Gascoigne), the treasurer (Tim Wilson) and
Page 8

five others from St Ebbe's in Headington (including two lay leaders), three of whom serve on PCC.

Grace Church Cowley Committee

Chair: *Ben Vane*

Remit:

1. To have an overview of the work of Grace Church Cowley and to advise and support the leader of Grace Church Cowley. To discuss and comment on administrative, financial, and spiritual matters relating to the work, including:
 - staff appointments
 - pastoral issues
 - buildings
 - programmes (e.g. evangelism, social outreach, teaching).
2. To receive financial reports from the Grace Church Cowley Treasurer.
3. To approve expenditure up to £5,000.

Meeting: around 5-6 times a year.

Membership: staff (currently Ben Vane), the treasurer (Sarah Bond) and five others from Grace Church Cowley (including two lay leaders), three of whom serve on PCC.

Overseas Partners Support Group (Central & Cowley)

Chair: *Penny Wearn*

Remit:

1. Supporting individuals
 - Meeting with those planning to go abroad and seeking support (financially and/or in prayer), helped by a reference from the relevant congregation leader. The full OPSG meets those planning to go longer term, and generally one or two people will meet those going for short term service. Recommendations are then made to PCC. Selection in accordance with criteria laid down October 2005 and approved by PCC.
 - Receiving news from Overseas Partners and taking action where necessary

- Meeting with Overseas Partners when they return to the UK to hear about their time abroad and plans for the future
2. Setting a budget for approval by the PCC to cover
 - committed support for long-term partners
 - proposed and committed support for those in training
 - proposed support for short-termers (those away for 1-3 years)
 - proposed support for summer teams, service overseas.
 - ensuring that the relevant amounts are paid to overseas partners
 3. Informing the church about our Overseas Partners, especially for prayer
 - Production of monthly prayer requests for our Partners
 - Preparation and running of World Focus Evening of Prayer and some input into World Focus Sunday.

Meeting: around 8 times a year.

UK Mission Group (Central & Cowley)

Chair: *Keith Proctor*

Remit:

1. Supporting individuals in gospel work within the UK:
 - Supporting the recruiting, training and deployment of Bible teachers (financially and/or in prayer);
 - Receiving news from partners and taking action where necessary;

All in accordance with the principles agreed when the UKMG was established in October 2000.

2. Setting a budget for approval by the PCC. Ensuring that the relevant amounts are paid to UK Partners.
3. Informing the church about our UK Partners, especially for prayer.

Meeting: 4 times a year.

Finance Committee

Chair: *Trevor Rayment*

Remit:

The principal role of the Finance Committee is to maintain an overview of the finances of St Ebbe's and its congregations to advise the PCC, the PCC Treasurer, and the treasurers of congregations. Specifically, this includes:

- To advise the PCC, PCC Treasurer, and congregational treasurers by detailed scrutiny of the yearly accounts, forecasts and plans.
- To seek and identify potential cost savings in order that we may be wise stewards of all that the Lord has provided.
- To advise on potential problems and financial opportunities
- To advise on policy regarding wills, trusts and legacies
- To pray specifically about the finances of St Ebbe's.

Membership

St Ebbe's Treasurer, congregational treasurers (e.g. Headington and Cowley) St Ebbe's Associate Minister (Operations), 2-3 members drawn from the St Ebbe's congregations selected on the basis of their financial experience and knowledge of St Ebbe's congregations.

Meeting: As needed, usually around 3-4 times a year.

Governance Committee

Chair: *Tim Dossor*

Remit:

1. To conduct an audit of the documentation of the current arrangements for the governance of each of the Church's sites and major activities, and for ensuring the compliance of each such site and activity with material applicable laws and regulations.
2. To make recommendations about significant changes and additions, and (where so mandated by the PCC) to prepare or commission the preparation of appropriate documentation.
3. To monitor future developments in the governance and regulatory framework and recommend any consequential changes to the church's policies and procedures.
4. To instruct external advisors as necessary in connection with the above, in consultation with the church's Treasurer and Associate Minister (operations).

Membership

Associate Minister (Operations), Treasurer, a Churchwarden, 2-3 members drawn from the St Ebbe's congregations and selected on the basis of their experience of governance and/or legal issues.

Pastoral Care

Chair: *Pete Wilkinson*

Remit:

1. to consider how we might better encourage and equip people in pastoral care, and to seek to have an overview of the pastoral care provided across the different congregations;
2. to identify those within the church family in particular need of care;
3. to ensure that the burden of care is sufficiently shared, drawing others in as needed.

Meeting: three or four times a year.

Maintenance Committee

Chair: *Cathy Terry*

Remit:

1. Maintenance and repair of all properties owned by or occupied by PCC (excluding those managed by Headington and Cowley). Includes gardens and equipment.
2. Focus is on doing this work, including raising volunteers to help.

Meeting: 4 times a year and when necessary.

Buildings Committee

Chair: *Tim Dossor*

Remit:

1. Oversight of the management of St Ebbe's Buildings.
2. Strategic planning for provision of St Ebbe's Property needs, including staff housing.
3. Liaison with the Littlegate Trust.

Hardship Fund Committee

Chair: *Paul Taylor*

Remit

1. To manage the St Ebbe's Hardship Fund:
2. Make grants (some of which may be repaid), as authorised by the PCC.
3. Raise new funds and monitor existing funds.
4. Encourage practical involvement in supporting those in need.
5. To support and enable staff in giving practical help in the context of pastoral care (to those in particular need).

Meeting: 2-3 times a year and as and when needed.

Membership: Paul Taylor, Roy Ford, Annabel Heywood, Andrew Turnbull, Will Cowan.