

PARISH OF ST JOHN FISHER, MERTON

Constitution of Parish Advisory Council (PAC), adopted by the Council on 00 (month), 2018.

Name

1. The name of the Council shall be: "The St. John Fisher Parish Advisory Council".

Role

2. The role of the Council shall be to advise and assist the parish priest of the Catholic parish of St. John Fisher, Cannon Hill Lane, London SW20, in the liturgical, pastoral, social and administrative affairs of the parish whether requested or of their own accord and to undertake any tasks delegated by the parish priest. The Council is empowered to appoint and disband standing and ad hoc committees (e.g. for the liturgy, premises matters and the constitution) as appropriate. Such committees should each have between 2 and 5 members, of whom the chair should be a member of the PAC and ideally at least 40% of the members should not be. They may report directly to the Parish Priest with a brief summary at the next PAC.

Membership

3. The Council shall be composed of not more than 25, nor less than 12 members, including a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Secretary.
4. The Council shall comprise:
 - Ex officio members, namely the clergy of the parish; any member of a religious order who assists the parish clergy on a continuing basis, **Chair of the Parish Finance Committee**; and such person as shall be appointed by the Council to be its Secretary.
 - Representatives of societies, organisations and groups currently active in the parish and approved as appropriate for representation by the Parish Priest and the Council.
 - A representative from St John Fisher Primary School.
 - Four representatives of the parishioners, to be elected by parishioners in accordance with this Constitution.
 - Any additional persons, not to exceed four, whom the Council may decide with the approval of the Parish Priest to co-opt.
5. It is intended that every Catholic society or group active at the time within the parish shall be represented directly or indirectly on the Council and will be strongly encouraged to nominate members. Where considered appropriate, smaller societies or groups may join together to nominate a joint representative on the Council.
6. The method by which such societies and groups shall choose their representative to serve on the parish council shall be at their discretion. An organisation shall be entitled to representation only during such time as that organisation is active in the parish.

Elections

7. The four persons elected to represent the parishioners shall be chosen from among parishioners, in the following manner:

The First Sunday in Advent in each alternate year (or such other Sunday as shall be agreed by the Council from time to time) shall be designated as election day.

At least one calendar month before election day notice of the election shall be given in the parish newsletter and by any other appropriate means.

Parishioners aged 16 or over who are willing to stand for election shall be invited to inform the Secretary of the Council or the Parish Priest in writing of that fact, to reach the Secretary or Parish Priest not later than 14 days before the election day. Such notification shall include the full name and address of the candidate and may also include a short statement giving other relevant information (such as length of time in the parish, activities and special interests). Such statements will be displayed in the Church.

Voting papers listing the candidates shall be prepared and distributed at each Mass on election day (including for this purpose the Vigil Mass on the previous evening). Each parishioner aged 16 or over who is present at Mass on election day shall be entitled to vote once for up to four candidates.

The voting papers shall be collected after Mass and the results of the election shall be published on the Sunday following the election.

President

8. The Parish Priest of St John Fisher, Merton shall be ex officio President of the Council.

Chairman & Vice Chairman

9. The Council shall elect from among its members a Chair and a Vice-Chair, to hold these offices respectively for a period of one year. Such election shall take place at the first meeting in each calendar year. The Chair and vice-Chair shall take up office immediately after that meeting.

Secretary

10. The Council, in consultation with the Parish Priest, shall appoint a Secretary, who shall be a member of the Council during his or her period of office, but who shall not at the same time serve as a representative or elected member.

Period of Service

11. Except as otherwise provided, all members shall serve for a period of two years from 1 January following their appointment or election. They may be reappointed or re-elected for up to two further two year periods.

12. In the event of a casual vacancy, such as by resignation or by cessation of membership under the cessation paragraph below, the Council may take appropriate steps to fill the

vacancy, the person so appointed or elected to serve for the remainder of the term of office of the member whom he or she is replacing.

Meetings

13. The Council shall meet not less than four times in each calendar year, on dates to be decided by the Council and of which reasonable notice shall be given both to members and to the parishioners at large. It shall also convene a meeting, held in April or such other time as the Council shall decide, to be an annual meeting of the parishioners, to report upon its work, and to hear suggestions from parishioners.

Quorum

14. One third of the members of the Council **but not fewer than eight** shall constitute a quorum.

Cessation of Membership

15. If any member **who is not ex-officio** is absent from all meetings of the Council held in any calendar year, he or she shall cease automatically to be a member of the Council and appropriate steps may be taken to fill the vacancy.

Communication

16. The Council shall always endeavour to communicate fully with the parishioners at large, keeping them informed of its discussions and ensuring that the views and needs of all sections of parishioners are made known to the parish clergy. So far as possible, the agenda of each Council meeting shall be announced in advance, in sufficient time for parishioners to make known their views.

17. The minutes of the Council shall be published after each meeting. Parishioners shall be free at any time to submit matters for discussion by the Council, at the discretion of the Chairman in consultation with the Parish Priest.

18. Any parishioner may attend any meeting of the Council as an observer.

Changes in Constitution

19. This Constitution may be altered by a two-thirds majority of those present at a Meeting of the Parish, of which reasonable notice has been given, including a statement of the changes proposed.