

The Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Pastoral Council seeks to work with the Parish Priest to enrich the quality of parish life by bringing alive the parish's vision.

The Parish vision is to become a community of disciples of Jesus and to joyfully take this good news to our whole area.

Its principal role is to:

Provide support, guidance and advice to recognised parish pastoral groups.
Lead, with the parish priest, the transmission of the parish vision and mission.
With the Finance and administration committee, lead the ongoing development, review and evaluation of a parish plan.
Consider and develop initiatives which promote the translation of the parish vision into practice.
Represent views of the laity to the parish priest.
Advise the parish priest on any major decisions or changing circumstances within the parish or wider community which affect the life and well-being **of the parish**, leading consultation with the wider parish community **where** appropriate.

Mission Statement

We serve God by serving our Parish and the wider community in Newent and Blaisdon by:

Welcoming All

Listening attentively

Acting thoughtfully

Taking responsibility

Facilitating and supporting actions taken

Being ecumenically positive

Reflecting back to the community

Being open to change

Living witness to Christ in our every day lives.

Membership of the Parish Pastoral Council

Membership is open to all parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes Newent and St Michael's Blaisdon who are over the age of sixteen years. The council should aim to reflect the diversity of the parish, it should be comprised of the following members:

The Parish Priest, Fr Barnabas Page, who is both member and president.

A chairperson,

A secretary *(These two roles are elected from the representatives below.)*

A representative of the Steering Group (or Leadership Group) until an Executive Group can replace it, drawn from the PPC

A representative of the Finance and Administration group

A person with safeguarding responsibilities

A representative of the Liturgy group

A representative of the Catechist group

A representative of the Outreach group

A representative of the Friendship and Care group

Up to four further members who are elected by the parish, or otherwise are selected by the parish priest (on advice if appropriate).

Whilst normally not exceeding 10 lay members, the council is also free to co-opt additional members where particular skills or knowledge are required for definite tasks.

The group representatives are to be chosen within the groups and for continuity will not change, apart from as below.

Terms of Membership

The aim should be for the parish council to remain unchanged for a 3 year period. After 3 years, at least one quarter of the membership should change. Ideally, no member should serve more than three consecutive terms.

Qualities and skills needed by the parish council members

All should be practising Catholics who participate regularly in the parish Sunday Mass. Members should seek to represent the parish as a whole, not just as representative of a particular parish group or organisation. They must be able to contribute effectively to the work of the PPC and be willing to give the commitment required from a parish council member.

Qualities

- An ability to listen**
- An ability to articulate accurately what one has heard**
- A desire for spiritual growth**
- An openness to study and reflection**
- An eagerness to help the parish articulate its vision and direction.**

Skills

At ease in working in groups

An ability to inspire and lead others

A willingness to delegate responsibilities

An ability to "follow through" after making a commitment

An ability to make decisions

An excitement about the parish

Availability of time and focused energy

Roles and responsibilities within the Parish Pastoral Council

Parish Priest is both member and president

- While he does not chair the parish council, the Parish Priest is the president. By presiding at the meeting of the parish council the parish priest brings the authority of the Bishop to the work of the council.
- As parish priest he bears the ultimate responsibility for decisions regarding pastoral ministry and the overall mission of the parish. In rare cases he may choose not to follow the advice of the PPC {Code of canon law 536} but as a member of the PPC he will not readily ignore their advice because he has participated in the prayerful process of making the decisions.
- He shares his understanding of the pastoral needs of the parish, including his hopes and aspirations for the future. He also enables the members of the council to exercise and develop their own gifts and together, they recognise and affirm the many gifts and ministries within the parish community,

Appointment to the Chair and Secretary roles is by election amongst the members of the **council**.

Chair

The role of Chair is key. He or she must be able to work with the parish priest, and also have the confidence of the whole parish council. Although the Chair is elected to serve for a three year term, he or she may resign after one year.

The role of the Chair is to:

- Establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the parish priest and develop an understanding of his aspirations for the parish.
 - Run the parish council meetings effectively, ensuring that everyone has a chance to contribute.
 - » Ensure significant time for prayer and formation is included at meetings to maintain the pastoral focus of the council.
 - » Provide encouragement and support to council members.
- * Establish communications channels within the parish. These channels should ensure that the PPC is in two-way communication with parishioners and all groups within the parish.
- » As outgoing Chair, oversee the election process for the Chair and Secretary roles.

Secretary

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Produce and distribute agendas (plus any preparatory reading), at least one week prior to the meeting
- Organise meeting place and resources for the meeting, to include refreshments
- Ensure actions and decisions are recorded and circulated to the parish council members within ten days of the meeting, ensuring that a brief summary is made available to the parish.

In due course there will be an **Executive**, comprising the Chair, the Finance and Administration representative and other PPC members, together with input from the Parish Priest where necessary, who will be responsible for

- agreeing the agenda of each meeting including matters identified by:
 - individual parish council members
 - individual parishioners
 - parish groups and organisations
 - the deanery
 - the wider community (e.g. Churches Together)
- dealing with any urgent business matters which may arise between council meetings and ensuring that such matters are reported to the next parish pastoral council meeting
- the ongoing formation of the PPC

Sufficient time should be set aside for prayer and reflection, and its priority understood. Responsibility for leading prayer should be taken by different people through the life of the PPC, and a range of individual approaches encouraged.

Parish Pastoral Council meeting effectiveness

The elements that enable the PC to work well together are:

- **Facilitating Environment** - arranging the meeting space so that it enables the active participation of the whole group. All members should be able to see and hear each other.
- **Good Agenda** - this is planned and distributed ahead of time with any reading material that is required. There is an allocated time for each item.
- **Focusing on a limited number of pastoral issues to prevent frustration.**
- **Indication of the member who is responsible for an agenda item**
- **Succinct Minutes** - PPC minutes should record the issues addressed and the agreed outcomes. This includes agreed actions, who will carry them out and by when.
- **Accountability** - the PPC should support each other in their ministry particularly by holding each other accountable to commitments that are made, contacting those who have missed meetings, undertaking to work with each other rather than alone. The PPC is also accountable to the

Diocese, Deanery and Parish communities.

- **Liaison – To mirror the presence of the representative of the Finance and Admin group a member of the council should be nominated to represent the council on that group.**

Frequency of parish council Meetings

Meetings will be held every six weeks. In case of emergency the Chair can call a meeting at short notice.

Parish Pastoral Council Communication with the Parish

Members of the PPC should be accessible and as well-known to their fellow parishioners as possible.

Effective, timely and regular communication with the wider parish community is also priority for the PPC. To achieve this the parish will be kept informed of the membership of the PPC, be advised of dates for meetings, and be given the opportunity of contributing to the agendas. Parishioners will be given a summary of the outcomes of the council meetings in the parish magazine, on the parish website and noticeboard,

Evaluation of parish council

The members of the parish council will meet in a prayerful context at an annual Half-Day of Reflection.

The PPC will also account for its work annually by arranging an annual parish meeting to review and reflect on the working of the PPC in the life of the parish, and to explain any proposed plans for the future.

Change of Parish Priest

Normally, to ensure continuity in the life of the parish, the PPC will continue its work during the period of transition. The PPC will welcome, support and help the new Parish Priest as he settles into his new role; and be ready to adjust, adapt or review its work and membership in consultation with parishioners, to meet any change of emphasis or new direction.