

## Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

“Guidelines for Leaders” - Chapter 4

### Chapelry and Parish Councils



Chapelry and Parish Councils oversee the life of the Chapelry and Parish between Vestry Meetings. They must follow the policy of the Diocese, and of the Chapelry or Parish Vestry.

A Chapelry is the local church community where you meet, worship and share your Christian life. The Chapelry Council oversees its life, mission and ministry. In a Congregation, which is not strong enough to be a Chapelry, the members may elect a Council to give that leadership.

The Parish is a geographical area, comprising a number of Chapelries and Congregations, which are all represented on the Parish Council. The Parish Council works with the Rector or Priest in Charge to co-ordinate the life, mission and ministry of all the Chapelries and Congregations that make up the Parish.

†Martin: St Mark the Evangelist

### 1. All Chapelry and Parish Councils

Some things are common to all Chapelry and Parish Councils, whether they serve at Chapelry or Parish level.

#### 1.1 Qualities of Councillors

In chapter 1 we referred to the three dimensions of leadership: knowledge, skills and character. The Diocese will do everything possible to provide training for those who are elected, but Vestries must be very careful to choose **people of integrity** to these important positions of servant-leadership. They must be members “in good standing”, who are regular in worship and setting an example in generous financial giving to the church (28.1 & 29.3). Having been elected to serve on Chapelry or Parish Council, they must be admitted to office and promise to live up to the **Pastoral Standards of the CPSA** (28.3-5 & 29.5-7).

#### 1.2 Duties of Chapelry and Parish Councils

The Rules explain what it means to oversee the life of the church by allocating various duties to Chapelry and Parish Councils. While these duties cover the same areas - the important difference is that:

- ✦ **Chapelry Councils** concentrate on their own local concerns
- ✦ **Parish Councils** coordinate the work of the various Chapelries, and consider the needs of the Parish as a whole.

These duties can be summarised under four main headings, which should be reflected in the Agenda of Council meetings.

### 1.2.1 Mission and Ministry (28.8.1 & 29.12.1)

Council must examine the needs of the community, and consider all the different aspects of the life of the church. These can be summarised by the acronym “SWEEP”, which stands for:

**S**

**Social Responsibility** includes areas like development, care for the poor, HIV and AIDS outreach

**W**

**Worship** covers times and styles of services, Clergy and Lay Ministers’ duties, choirs and servers

**E**

**Evangelism** is our ministry or proclaiming the Good News in word and deed, presence and through programmes

**E**

**Education** refers to our calling to make disciples - for example, through Bible studies, Sunday School, Training for Ministries, small groups, Baptism & Confirmation preparation

**P**

**Pastoral Care** includes home visiting, healing, caring & praying for the sick, and counselling.

We should do all these things together with other Christians wherever possible, so as to promote Christian witness and unity (28.8.2 & 29.12.2)

### 1.2.2 Property and Finance (See 28.8-9 & 29.12-13 for details)

The Council is responsible for all financial management - although it may allow groups of organisations within the Chapelry or Parish to raise funds and use them appropriately. Financial management includes:

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| ✦ Fund raising          | ✦ Bookkeeping             |
| ✦ Preparing a budget    | ✦ Employment of lay staff |
| ✦ Receipts and payments |                           |

Although all property ultimately belongs to the Diocesan Trustees, the Council is responsible to care for it and maintain it.

### 1.2.3 Referred Matters (28.8.5 & 29.12.5)

Council must deal with any item that the Bishop, Diocesan Synod or other competent body (like your Archdeacon, Provincial Synod, or Diocesan Standing Committee) refers to it.

### 1.2.4 Welfare of Clergy (28.8.6 & 29.12.6)

Different clergy have varying needs - depending on whether they are paid by the church or self-supporting. But all of them need love, support and practical care.

## **1.3 Office Bearers**

### **1.3.1 Chairperson (28.10 & 29.14)**

The Rector or Priest in Charge (Incumbent) is automatically the Chairperson of Council, unless he or she chooses to delegate this responsibility to someone elected by Council. If there is no Incumbent, then Council elects a Chairperson.

### **1.3.2 Chapelwardens or Parish Wardens (See Rules 26 & 27)**

Wardens have special responsibilities to:

- ✦ Oversee financial management
- ✦ Care for church property
- ✦ Maintain the membership register and see to seating of the congregation
- ✦ Assist the Incumbent with information and counsel.

Together with the Incumbent they form the Executive of the Chapelry or Parish, and their task is to **carry out the decisions of the Vestry and Parish Council** for which they are especially responsible. They may recruit others to help them.

### **1.3.3 Minutes Secretary and Treasurer (28.9.8-10 & 29.13.11-13)**

Council must appoint people (or it could be the same person) to serve as Minutes Secretary and Treasurer.

### **1.3.4 Committees (28.18 & 29.22)**

Council may appoint Committees (or organisations) to carry out any of its duties - as long as they report back to Council and operate its guidelines. The Incumbent has a right to serve on any of these committees.

## **2. Chapelry Council (Rule 28)**

As indicated before, Chapelry Councils focus the above on their particular church community. In doing so, there are a few Rules that apply particularly to them.

### **2.1 Chapelry Council Meetings**

#### **2.1.1 Frequency (28.11-16)**

Chapelry Council Meetings should normally take place monthly - unless there is a good reason to have an additional meeting, or to delay one. Proper notice should be given to all the members, and an Agenda prepared beforehand. At least five people must be present to form a quorum.

#### **2.1.2 Information Required (28.23)**

In order to help with the meeting, the Office Bearers should do everything possible to make the following information is available:

- ✦ A Register of Members of the Chapelry
- ✦ The latest Bank Statements (if the Chapelry has a Bank account)

- ⌘ Chapelry Financial Statement
- ⌘ A copy of the Constitution and Canons of the CPSA
- ⌘ A copy of the Rules of the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

## 2.2 Sample Agenda

Bringing together everything above, here is an Agenda that can serve as a good example for a Chapelry Council Meeting.

Name of Chapelry	CHAPELRY COUNCIL AGENDA	Date
<u>1.</u>	<u>Opening</u>	
	1.1 Bible Study	
	1.2 Prayer	
<u>2.</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	
	2.1 Present	
	2.2 Apologies	
	2.3 Absent	
<u>3.</u>	<u>Minutes of Last Meeting</u>	
	3.1 Approval	
	3.2 Matters Arising (if not already on Agenda)	
<u>4.</u>	<u>Mission and Ministry</u>	
	<i>Headings will cover "SWEEP" (See above) - including reports and proposals from Committees and Organisations</i>	
<u>5.</u>	<u>Property and Finance</u>	
	5.1 Financial Statement	
	5.2 Property Maintenance	
	<i>There may also be items to do with the Chapelry Budget, Stewardship campaign, and building plans</i>	
<u>6.</u>	<u>Matters Referred</u>	
<u>7.</u>	<u>Welfare of Clergy</u>	
	<i>This is more likely to be relevant to the Parish Council Agenda, but is important here if there are clergy attached to a particular Chapelry</i>	
<u>8.</u>	<u>Report to Parish Council</u>	
	<i>What decisions or issues from Chapelry Council need to be taken to Parish Council?</i>	

*Continued on the next page...*

9.	<u>Next Meeting</u>
9.1	Date and Time
9.2	Venue
10.	<u>Closing Prayer</u>

## 2.3 Congregations

Where there are congregations that are not strong enough to be recognised as Chapelries, the Rules do not burden them with all these requirements. Instead, they are entitled to elect an informal Council to give leadership (28.2). They may also be attached to a nearby Chapelry for ministry purposes, and have representatives on Parish Council.

## 3. Parish Council (Rule 29)

Parish Councils deal with the same issues above, but from the perspective of the whole Parish. Their task is to coordinate the work of the various Chapelries, help them to cooperate with one another, and set priorities for the Parish as a unit. The Parish Council also oversees the functions that are common to the Parish, such as care for the Rector.

### 3.1 Parish Council Meetings

#### 3.1.1 Frequency (29.15-20)

Under normal circumstances, the Parish Council is only required to meet once every four months - although meetings may take place more often if required. Proper notice should be given to all the members, and an Agenda prepared beforehand. At least five people must be present to form a quorum.

#### 3.1.2 Information Required (29.27)

In order to help with the meeting, the Office Bearers should do everything possible to make the following information is available, as well as anything needed for the items on the Sample Agenda below:

- ✦ The names of the members of the Parish Council
- ✦ A list of the Chapelries that make up the Parish
- ✦ Worship attendance at the Chapelries on a monthly basis
- ✦ Parish Bank statements
- ✦ Income from the Chapelries
- ✦ Financial Statement
- ✦ A copy of the Constitution and Canons of the CPSA
- ✦ A copy of the Rules of the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist.

### 3.2 Sample Agenda

Bringing together everything above, here is an Agenda that can serve as a good example for a Parish Council Meeting.

Name of Parish	PARISH COUNCIL AGENDA	Date
1. <u>Opening</u>	1.1 Bible Study 1.2 Prayer	
2. <u>Attendance</u>	2.1 Present (including Chapelry represented) 2.2 Apologies 2.3 Absent	
3. <u>Minutes of Last Meeting</u>	3.1 Approval 3.2 Matters Arising (if not already on Agenda)	
4. <u>Reports from Chapelry Councils</u>	<i>What decisions or issues from the Chapelry Councils are relevant to the whole Parish? How can we work together? These may be covered below:</i>	
5. <u>Mission and Ministry</u>	<i>Headings will cover "SWEEP" (See above) - including reports and proposals from Committees and Parish Organisations</i>	
6. <u>Property and Finance</u>	6.1 Income from the Chapelries 6.2 Financial Statement 6.2 Building Priorities	
7. <u>Matters Referred</u>		
8. <u>Welfare of Clergy</u>	8.1 Accommodation of the Rector (29.13.9) 8.2 Transport for Incumbent and Other Clergy 8.3 Ongoing Clergy Training (29.13.10)	
9. <u>Next Meeting</u>	9.1 Date and Time 9.2 Venue	
10. <u>Closing Prayer</u>		

#### 4. Communication and Support

Remember, our goal is to help and support one another so that the whole Church can grow strong in service of the Kingdom of God! If one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. If the stronger parts build up those that are weaker, then we will all benefit together - and God will be glorified.

