

Annual Meetings

The Church Representation Rules state

Rule 6(1):

In every parish there shall be held not later than the 30th April in each year the annual parochial church meeting (the “annual meeting”).

Rule 6(2):

All lay persons whose names are entered on the roll of the parish shall be entitled to attend the annual meeting and to take part in its proceedings, and no other lay person shall be so entitled.

Rule 7(1):

The annual meeting shall be convened by the minister of the parish by a notice in the form set out in section 4 of Appendix I to these rules affixed on or near to the principal door of every church in the parish, and every building licensed for public worship in the parish, for a period including the last two Sundays before the day of the meeting.

Rule 11(9):

The result of any election by an annual meeting shall be announced as soon as practicable by the person presiding over the election, and a notice of the result shall in every case be affixed on or near the principal door of every church in the parish and every building licensed for public worship in the parish, and shall bear the date on which the result is declared. The notice shall remain affixed for not less than fourteen days.

Synodical Government Measure 1969 as amended © Crown Copyright 1969–2001

The Churchwardens Measure 2001, which came into force on 1 January 2002, states:

Section 1:

The churchwardens of every parish shall be chosen from persons who have been baptised and —

- whose names are on the church electoral roll of the parish;
- who are actual communicants;
- who are twenty-one years of age or upwards; and
- who are not disqualified. [Note: download the nomination form below for details of disqualifications]

Section 4:

The churchwardens of a parish shall be chosen annually not later than the 30th April in each year.

Subject to the provisions of this Measure the churchwardens of a parish shall be elected by a meeting of the parishioners.

Candidates for election at the meeting must be nominated and seconded in writing by persons entitled to attend the meeting and each nomination paper must include a statement, signed by the person nominated, to the effect that that person is willing to serve as a churchwarden and is not disqualified.

A nomination shall not be valid unless —

the nomination paper is received by the minister of the parish before the commencement of the meeting; and

in the case of a person who is not [normally] qualified, the bishop’s permission was given ... before the nomination paper is received by the minister of the parish.

If it appears to the minister of the parish that the election of any particular person nominated

might give rise to serious difficulties between the minister and that person in the carrying out of their respective functions the minister may, before the election is conducted, make a statement to the effect that only one churchwarden is to be elected by the meeting. In that event one churchwarden shall be appointed by the minister from among the persons nominated, the name of the person so appointed being announced before the election is conducted, and the other shall then be elected by the meeting.

Section 5:

A joint meeting of —

the persons whose names are entered on the church electoral roll of the parish; and

the persons resident in the parish whose names are entered on a register of local government electors by reason of such residence, shall be deemed to be a meeting of the parishioners for the purposes of this Measure.

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The Annual Meeting

It is normal for the Election of Churchwardens and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to be held at the same time. However, the Statutory Notice for the APCM as laid down in the Rules makes no provision for the Election of Churchwardens, so there have to be two notices. The Statutory Notice as laid down by the Rules is available below; also available are a Notice and a nomination form which satisfy the new Churchwardens Measure. Both Notices have to be displayed for a period of at least fourteen days including the two Sundays before the Meeting.

Note also that the Election of Churchwardens can be attended by people who are not on the Electoral Roll. They can attend and vote, but are not entitled to attend the APCM and they may be excluded from that meeting. By the same token, there is nothing to stop a parish allowing such people to attend the APCM, and this may be pastorally advantageous.

From 2002, prospective churchwardens must be members of the electoral roll; in prior years residence in the parish was sufficient. That year marked the start of the six-year qualifying period for terms of office. Unless an annual meeting determines otherwise, churchwardens elected in 2002 must retire in 2008, if they do not do so before then; those who have served continuously from 2002 to 2008 must then have two years “off” and become eligible for the office again in 2010.

Electoral Roll

The last revision of the Electoral Roll was in 2002, and another full revision is due in 2007. Membership of the Roll has to be reported at the APCM, and Electoral Roll Officers should ensure that the names of those who have moved or died, or who live outside the parish but have not worshipped regularly for six months, or others who are no longer eligible for membership, have been removed. The period up to the APCM is also a good time to remind eligible members of the congregation of the existence of the Roll and invite them to apply to join.

Electoral Roll officers are reminded of the requirement to liaise with their counterparts in other parishes about members moving between parishes. It is good practice to inform “lapsed” members who live outside the parish that they are to be removed from the Roll.

The revision of the Roll must be completed at least fourteen days (but not more than 28 days) before the APCM, and the revised Roll is then closed until after the APCM. The revised Roll must be exhibited in church for the period between its completion and the APCM in order that inaccuracies can be notified and corrected. Young people who have their sixteenth birthday during the closure period can apply for membership before the Roll is closed, completing the “become sixteen on...” sentence. They become members on their sixteenth birthday and can attend the APCM as members of the Roll.