

## A GUIDE FOR CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICERS

### General

It is essential that the Church Electoral Roll is accurately kept, is revised annually and that a new Roll is properly prepared when required. The Roll is used to determine eligibility for attendance and participation at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) and for election to the Parochial Church Council (PCC). It is also used to determine eligibility for election to the deanery, diocesan and general synods. In addition it is used for the calculation of the number of representatives who may be elected to each of these synods in the following year.

### Revision of Roll

The Roll is revised every year (except when a new Roll is prepared – see next paragraph) in time for the APCM. Notice of the revision should be displayed at least 6 weeks before your APCM to allow for 14–28 days revision period followed by 14 days display of the newly revised Roll prior to the APCM. Please note that to comply with data protection requirements only names should be displayed on the published Roll, not people's contact details. The forms can be found on the national Parish Resources website at [The Annual Parochial Church Meeting & Electoral Roll – Parish Resources](#)

### The New Roll

Every sixth year, instead of a revision, a completely new Roll has to be prepared, the next time being in 2025. Notices may be downloaded from the website above. Forms for application for enrolment are the same as those used for an annual revision.

### Certification

The numbers on the Roll need to be certified to the Diocesan Office each year. Information about this is sent out automatically by the Diocesan Office in the early part of the year.

### Your Questions Answered

Every parish should have access to an up to date copy of the Church Representation Rules (the current edition is dated 2022). This provides the detailed information you require relating to eligibility for inclusion in a Roll, its preparation, maintenance, and revision. It is available from Church House publishing – [www.chpublishing.co.uk](http://www.chpublishing.co.uk) (01603 785925). It can also be found online at <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/church-representation-rules/introduction>.

There are some questions that parishes regularly ask this Office and the answers to these are set out below:

1. The Church Electoral Roll is for lay persons only. Retired clergy are still clergy and therefore not eligible for inclusion.
2. To be entitled to be included on the Roll a lay person must be:

- a. baptised
  - b. over 16 years of age on or before the date of the annual parochial church meeting.
  - c. either – a member\* of the Church of England, or a Church in Communion with the Church of England (please see attached list), and resident in the parish. (There is no requirement to go to church regularly).
- or – a member of the Church of England, or a Church in communion with the Church of England, and resident in another parish, but habitually attending worship in the chosen parish for at least 6 months prior to enrolment (unless prevented from doing so by illness or other sufficient cause).
- or – a member of a Church subscribing to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, such as Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, URC, etc (in other words, most mainstream Christian churches but not, for example, Unitarians or Jehovah's Witnesses) and prepared to declare themselves a member of the Church of England, and having habitually attended worship in the chosen parish for at least 6 months prior to enrolment.
- d. A person must also have signed an application form for enrolment.
  3. A person can be on the Roll of several parishes if fulfilling the above criteria, but can only use one parish for the purposes of membership of the PCC, elections to synods, etc.
  4. Except every 6th year, when a new Roll is prepared, the Roll shall be revised annually.
  5. Names can be added to or removed from the Roll during the course of the year, with the exception as laid down in point 6, below. All such changes must be reported to the next meeting of the PCC.
  6. No names shall be added to or removed from the Roll between the completion of the Roll and the close of the APCM (which must take place before 31st May each year). This means that those who miss the closing date for completion of the Roll, (14 days before the APCM), will not be eligible to attend the APCM or take part in the proceedings.
  7. The number of representatives for election to deanery and diocesan synods depends on the number on the Roll in the previous year.
  8. Under Data Protection legislation (UK-GDPR) the list of those on the Church Electoral Roll may not be used as a general mailing list for church communications except in very limited circumstances. Please see the covering letter to this mailing for advice. Otherwise, a separate consent form will need to be used to compile such a mailing list from the Electoral Roll.

**NB – Churchwardens** – The meeting to choose the churchwardens may be attended by those on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll of the parish as well as those on the Church Electoral Roll and both categories may participate.

\* "**member**" is not defined by Church Representation Rules – it is enough for a person to say that they are a member of the Church of England.

#### **Useful Contact details**

Church House Bookshop

Tel: 020 7799 4064

[www.chpublishing.co.uk](http://www.chpublishing.co.uk)

Salisbury Diocesan Office

Tel: 01722 411922

[www.salisbury.anglican.org](http://www.salisbury.anglican.org)

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