

THE PARISH OF OUR LADY OF VICTORIES

Parish Pastoral Committee Constitution

Our Parish Pastoral Committee consists of lay people and clergy who work together to build the parish into a vibrant Christian community reflecting the gospel values of love, justice and peace for all. Our Parish Pastoral Committee exists to:

- Support the leadership of the parish clergy;
- Listen to the needs and concerns of the community;
- Reflect and prayerfully plan future directions for the parish and prioritise initiatives to be undertaken within the parish and with the local community;
- Provide the ongoing formation, evaluation and training for committee members.
- Ensure that effective communication takes place within the parish, the archdiocese and the wider community;
- Recognise and build on work already done, affirm the contribution of those involved as well as celebrating the gifts and achievements of all parishioners; and
- Review the life and activities of the parish in order to enable the kingdom of God to flourish in the life of the community of Hightown.

MEMBERSHIP

There will be a maximum of ten committee members including the clergy of the parish (ex-officio) and the ex-officio members shall have the full rights of an elected member. Apart from the ex-officio members, the committee members should be nominated and selected by the community. Should the need arise, the officers of the parish committee might appoint two further members, because of their expertise in given areas, and such expert members shall have the full rights of an elected member.

All committee members will be representative of the whole parish community and focus on what is best for the whole parish, not individual groups. There will be a period of training / induction for all newly appointed committee and subcommittee members and on-going formation will be organised as the need arises.

SELECTION OF MEMBERS

Three months prior to the completion of a term of office a working group will be set up to coordinate the nomination and selection process. All parishioners of Our Lady of Victories, Hightown, are eligible to stand for the pastoral committee and to vote. In this context parishioners are people who either live within the Hightown parish boundary or who regularly worship at Our Lady of Victories. Following nominations, the elections will take place in a secret written ballot at Our Lady of Victories, immediately after a Sunday mass. Simple majority will elect the committee members.

PERIOD OF MEMBERSHIP & FILLING VACANCIES

A period of office will be normally four years with half of the committee re-elected every two years. A candidate can only be elected for two terms of office but may stand again after a period of two years. If a vacancy arises the parish priest, in consultation with the committee, may appoint a new member as a substitute who shall have the full rights of an elected member and can remain in office until the next election. Similarly an expert appointed to the committee can also remain in office until the next election. Where any election is being held to fill more than half of the committee posts, it will need to be agreed prior to the ballot how many of the posts are available for a four-years period and how many are available for two years. The four-year posts will normally be awarded to those candidates receiving the larger number of votes.

VOTING RIGHTS AND QUORUM

All elected committee members including the chair, vice-chair and secretary, ex-officio member, expert members and substitute members are each entitled to cast one vote on any motion. In the event of a dead heat the parish priest shall have the casting vote and should a dead heat occur at a meeting where the parish priest is not present, the matter shall be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee when the parish priest is present. A quorum shall constitute no less than one-third of those members entitled to vote.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Where possible, decision making will be through consensus but the parish priest has a right of veto to overrule any decision that is made, either at the meeting at which it occurs or subsequently.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

Each member of the parish pastoral committee will be required to:

- Regularly attend meetings of the parish pastoral committee with any member failing to attend four consecutive meetings without apology and explanation, will be deemed to have resigned;
- Participate in the discussions;
- When possible to take part in the implementation of parish policies; and
- Grow in knowledge and awareness of what is happening in the parish.

OFFICES OF THE PARISH COMMITTEE

The office bearers of chair, vice-chair and secretary will be elected by the committee at their first meeting after the elections from amongst themselves and then annually thereafter. The clergy and parish financial manager will also be deemed as officers of the parish committee. The role of the chair is to:

- Ensure the effective running of each meeting;
- Monitor the time frame of the meeting;
- Encourage the active participation of all members; and
- Set the agenda in consultation with the secretary and the clergy.

The role of the secretary is to:

- Provide minutes of the meetings;
- Attend to correspondence;
- Be responsible for the distribution of minutes and agendas; and
- In the absence of the chair, to set the agenda with the vice-chair and the clergy.

The role of the vice-chair is to undertake the office of the chair in the chair's absence.

MINUTE BOOK

The secretary shall keep the minute book in which are recorded both the minutes of the meetings and the names and addresses of the members.

SUBCOMMITTEES

The committee has the power to appoint and to rescind subcommittees, in order to advance and complete special projects.

PRAYER

Prayer is an essential element of the meeting therefore the committee is encouraged to begin all meetings in prayer.

MEETINGS

There will be a minimum of six meetings of the committee each year. The agenda for each meeting will be finalised by the secretary, chair and the clergy and made available to members three days before the meeting. Minutes of the meeting will be circulated at least 3 days prior to the next meeting. Once approved, the minutes will be available to the parish.

EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

Any two members of the committee may call an extraordinary meeting. The agenda outlining the business to be discussed at such a meeting shall be declared and circulated seven days in advance unless, all the members agree a shorter time.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PARISH

The committee will report through approved minutes and other means, to the wider parish regularly and will encourage responses and suggestions from the community. It is recommended that parishioners be made aware of whom committee members are.