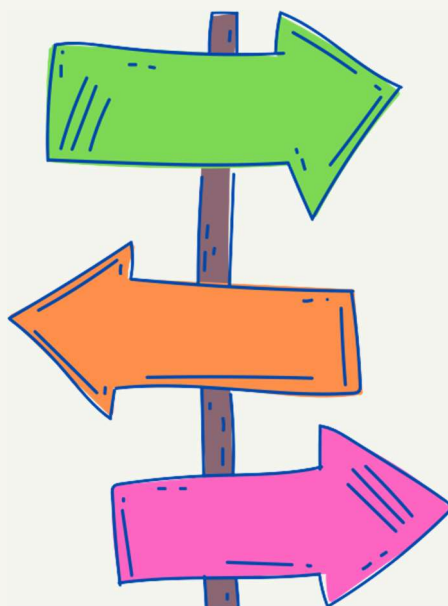


“What on Earth is a PCC?” and Other Questions About CofE Governance

***Feeling confused about Church of England governance and elections?
Want to know how you can get involved or just want more information about how it all works?***

This simple guide is here to help, taking you through the church’s decision making processes, from the local parish to the national level. We can all have a say in them.

If you’d like to know the full rules, have a look at the [Church Representation Rules](#) on the CofE website



Electoral Roll

Before looking at the four levels of Synodical governance, we'll start with the Electoral Roll. What's it for?

The Electoral Roll is a list of everyone involved in the life of the church who wants to take part in its governance in any way

To be able to vote at your Annual Parochial Church Meeting you need to be on the parish Electoral Roll.

You also need to be on the Electoral Roll to stand for election for any level of church governance, local or national.

To be on the Electoral Roll of a church you need to be:

- Baptised,
- Aged 16 or over,
- Resident in the parish or regularly attending the church for at least six months.

There is an online form you can download, fill out and pass on to your parish electoral roll officer, your priest or a churchwarden.

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The PCC:

Supports the clergy in making decisions about your local church.

Helps manage the finances of the church.

Works with the clergy and lay ministers to decide the church's position on a whole range of things, big and small.

Every church benefits from having a PCC which works well together.

PCC members are elected at a yearly meeting each spring called the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

You do not need your vicar's permission to stand for election to the PCC. The election is from and by the lay members on the Electoral Roll.

The two churchwardens, who are elected into post at the APCM by the lay people on the Electoral Roll, are automatically on the PCC.

Every PCC is legally a charity, and the PCC members act as the trustees.

Deanery Synod

What's it for?

Deanery Synod helps to promote communication and encouragement across the Anglican churches in its area.

It also represents those churches in decisions made with the diocese around things such as the deployment of clergy and how parishes are joined together in ministry.

Who's on it?

Representatives from around 10 to 30 churches, often drawn across a part of a city, a town or a rural area.

Its members are (i) **all** the licensed clergy of all those churches **and** (ii) elected lay people from those churches.

The number of elected lay representatives from each church depends on the size of that church's Electoral Roll.

Some clergy with Permission to Officiate can also be elected (see CRR 15(2))

Deanery Synod

How are they chosen?

Lay representatives are elected by the lay people in their church at the APCM. To stand for election you need to be on the Electoral Roll. You do not need to already be on the PCC, you do not need your vicar's permission to stand.

If your church has not filled all of its allocated deanery synod spaces the vacancy can be filled by a vote of the PCC - it does not require the whole church meeting at an APCM to fill the vacancy. This way of filling a vacancy only applies if there is not an APCM coming up in the next two months.

A term on deanery synod is for three years and the lay representatives from different churches are all elected at the same time.



Diocesan Synod

What's it for?

Supporting the Bishop in setting policy across the diocese.

Helping to govern the Diocesan Board of Finance and make decisions at Diocesan level.

Who's on it?

The Bishops, Cathedral Dean and Archdeacons.

Elected clergy and laity from the diocese.

How are they chosen?

Clergy and laity are elected by members of each Deanery Synod, with clergy electing the clergy members and laity electing the lay members.

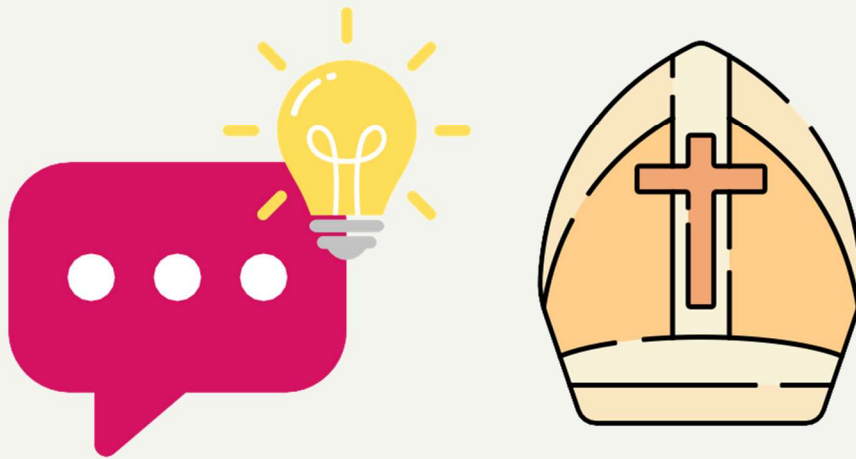
Elections are every 3 years, with those elected serving a 3-year term.

Laity can stand for election provided they are on an Electoral Roll of a parish in the deanery. **They do not have to be already on the deanery synod to stand**, although they will need two lay members of deanery synod to nominate them.

Diocesan Synod

The members of the diocesan synod form the electorate for various important boards and committees within the diocese, including:

- The Bishop's Council (which does some of the more detailed policy work as a standing committee of the diocesan synod)
- The Vacancy in See Committee (for when the diocesan bishop post is vacant)



General Synod

What's it for?

The General Synod is the national assembly of the Church of England, responsible for many of the rules and laws that govern how the church functions.

Who's on it?

Around 450 members, including:

- The House of Bishops (around 50 members comprising all diocesan and some suffragan bishops)
- The House of Clergy (around 200 members, mostly elected from the dioceses)
- The House of Laity (around 200 members, mostly elected from dioceses)

How are they chosen?

Clergy and laity members of the General Synod are elected by members across all of the deanery synods in the diocese.

Clergy representatives are elected by the clergy and lay representatives are elected by the laity.

General Synod

To stand as a candidate in the **lay election**:

- You need to be on an Electoral Roll of a parish in the diocese
- You do not have to be on diocesan or deanery synod, nor do you have to be serving on a PCC



Responsibilities

Membership of a synod gives you *ex-officio* membership of all tiers of church governance below the synod. For example, if you are elected to diocesan synod, you will also be on your local deanery synod and PCC.

Serving on your PCC or in other aspects of church governance is one way that Christians give service to God and their community.

It's important that a wide range of voices, perspectives and skills are included so that good decisions can be made.

If you are thinking that you might wish to participate in any way, it is good to pray about the responsibility you would be seeking. People in the Together Network, whether in your diocese or nationally, can help you understand what is involved and can advise & support you with any election processes.

Visit <https://togethercofe.org.uk/> to get in touch!

**MAKE A
DIFFERENCE.
JOIN
TOGETHER.**

