

DRAFT – version 1, 10 march

Hurunui Catholic Parish of the Good Shepherd

Guidelines/Membership



Introduction

The main role of the Parish Council is to collaborate with the Parish Priest in his task to minister to the **pastoral** needs of the parish. It is important that at the outset of a new council, all members are clear about the council's roleⁱ.

The Parish Priest, in his Pastoral Ministry, needs to set a vision, plan and put them into action. For a parish to function healthily, members of the Parish Council need to assist him in this task. And in order to do so, they must know what is going on in the parish that they may assist him, not only by offering their opinions on pastoral matters, but also assist him in putting pastoral initiatives into action. The latter does not mean that members have to do all the work themselves, for a Parish Councillor is one that can draw on other parishioners to share their time and talent in building up the Parish. Towards this end, members need to get to know a wide a circle of parishioners as possible, and this is only possible if members are active in the parish – firstly in Sunday worship (Mass), and then in parish life.

Members of the Parish Council are expected to bring the gift of service to the team, each contributing his/her own talents and charisms, expertise, perspective, skills and knowledge to the Council to help the Parish Priest in enriching the life of the Parish. They do so by providing and creating opportunities for parishioners to grow in holiness, and to discover and live out their personal and communal call to Mission, to live as Catholics/Christians who are 'salt of the earth', and 'light to the nations'.

The main functions of members are;

- To be a source of ideas for Pastoral Initiatives
- To act as a sounding board for the Parish Priest if and when he needs different viewpoints and opinions on Pastoral Matters
- To assist the Parish Priest in acquiring the resources (people or material things) needed to implement any Pastoral Initiatives
- To assist in ensuring that Pastoral Plans are carried out
- To evaluate the Pastoral Goals and Initiatives

Membership

As the work of the Parish Council is to assist the Parish Priest in his Pastoral Ministry, membership of the Council should ideally represent a broad range of parishioners.

The Parish Priest may invite members on board for Pastoral reasons, and nominate positions that are “ex-officio” (i.e. some people enjoy automatic membership on the council by the fact of their office or responsibility). In Fr Michael Pui’s tenure as Parish Priest, his ‘ex-officio’ members shall include;

1. A representative from the Beatitudes Community
2. At least one member of the Finance Council*
3. Assistant priest/deacon if there is one appointed to the Parish

*(*Note: at present all members of the Finance Council is on the Parish Council, as ‘inherited’!!)*

Ideally once a year, there should be an election for members which are nominated by parishioners. In Fr Michael Pui’s tenure as Parish Priest, the elected member will serve for a term of three years. After 2 consecutive terms (i.e. a total of six consecutive years), members have to take a year’s break before seeking election again.

Other members may be seconded on to the Council by the Parish Priest’s where necessary; e.g. when no parishioners are nominated, or when there is a special need.

Ex-officio members are there as long as they are able to serve.

The total membership (excluding the “ex-officios”) should ideally not exceed 7 unless pastoral needs require it.

Expectations

Members of the Parish Pastoral Council are expected to:

1. Commit positively and enthusiastically to the task of the Council, upholding always its Catholic values and moral code.
2. Attend all scheduled meetings. When circumstances arise where attendance is not possible, to offer an apology in advance to the Chairperson or the Parish Priest. A Council member who misses three consecutive meetings without an official apology ceases to be a member of the Council.
3. Prepare for the meeting by;
 - a. Remembering to pray for Parish, and the work of the Council
 - b. Reading and material that has been sent out before the meeting (agenda, issues, minutes, etc)
4. Be willing to contribute time and talents to the initiatives agreed upon at the meetings
5. Respond to emails promptly when opinion is sought on Pastoral Matters by the Parish Priest.
6. Strive to have a more visible presence in the life of the Parish Community, taking a pro-active interest in the wider parish that he/she may better understand its dynamics and represent parishioners.
7. Keep an eye and an ear open in the Parish environment as to some of the Pastoral Issues that may have arisen and to inform the Parish Priest of them for his consideration.
8. Discern at the end of each term of office whether to continue to serve on the Council.

Guidelines for Parish Council Meetings

At the end of the previous calendar year, members are to decide the time, date and location of Council meetings for the year. There should be at least 5 meetings in each year, and when necessary.

Any member of the Parish or invited guests can attend the meeting, which will be advertised in the Church's bulletin and/or website. Speaking rights are granted to non-Council attendees at the discretion of the Council.

Meeting Procedure

- Welcome and Apology
- Spiritual Reflection and/or Prayer
- Correspondence
- Minutes of last meeting
- Matters arising and any follow up
- Pastoral Issues and 'Actions'
- Closing Prayer and reminder of next meeting

Debate and Contribution to the Meetings

There would be matters in the daily running of the parish that the Parish Priest exercises without any reference to the Council. However, when he includes it on Agenda for meeting or raised it as a Pastoral Issue for the Meeting to consider, it is because he needs the advice of the Council, or assistance in planning and putting into action some pastoral initiatives or response.

The Parish Council works in collaboration with the Parish Priest. He may, because of the pastoral sensitivity known only to him choose **not** to heed certain advice. In any Pastoral Issue or discussion that may be contentious, members can agree to disagree, and choose to have their differed opinion recorded in the minutes. However, in all situation, Christian charity must always be exercised.

The role of the Chairperson is to ensure that all discussion/debate are brought to a timely conclusion and that everyone who wishes to contribute to any discussion is given the opportunity.

ⁱ See Copy of "Parish Pastoral n Finance Council - a Clarification – 2020" – by Fr Michael Pui