

1 February 2024

Annual General Meeting 2024 for Schedule 1 Parishes

This letter is to advise you of certain matters concerning the annual general meeting (AGM) of parishioners to be held this year.

A key component of the annual general meeting of parishioners is the election of parish officers and members of the Parish Council. Many of these positions, especially that of Wardens and Parish Council members, have significant influence on the implementation of child-safety policy and ministry related to children. The Synod is committed to entrenching Safe Ministry into our governance culture, and the Archbishop has asked that I convey his encouragement to you, to work towards a majority of your Wardens and Parish Council, and any other parish officers that make decisions with implications for child-safety in your parish, holding a current Safe Ministry Accreditation. Please visit the [Safe Ministry Training website](#) for more information.

When an annual general meeting of parishioners is to be held

The [Parish Administration Ordinance 2008](#) provides in rule 2.2 of Schedule 1 that the AGM be held for each church on or after 1 February but no later than 31 March 2024. In accordance with rule 2.2(2) if a church is unable to hold its AGM within the specified period, the minister and wardens of the church can apply to the Archbishop for permission to hold its meeting at a time outside this period by sending me an email to registry@sydney.anglican.asn.au. In 2024 Easter occurs in the last weekend of March so the Archbishop has determined that all parishes can hold their AGM up until Sunday, 7 April 2024.

Convening a general meeting of parishioners

To convene a general meeting rule 4.1 provides the process and the notice period. A general meeting is convened by the minister and wardens. As this meeting is for an AGM, the notice can only contain the business of the AGM that is listed in rule 3.1.

Rule 3.2 outlines the circumstances in which churches in a multi-church parish may have a combined AGM, but permission for this needs to be given by the Regional Council. This permission, if it has been given, will have been given in writing.

Declaration for parishioners

The declaration to complete before a parishioner can participate in a general meeting is listed in rule 4.2(1) of the *Parish Administration Ordinance*.

Information to be given to the Annual General Meeting.

Rule 3.9 of the ordinance lists the financial information that wardens are to provide to the AGM.

Disqualified persons

A person who has been convicted of a disqualifying offence listed in Schedule 2 of the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* may not be appointed or elected as a Warden, a member of a Parish Council, a parish nominator, or to a committee established under rule 3.5.

For further information about a disqualifying offence, you should contact the Director of the Office of Safe Ministry on 9265 1514.

Information for parishioners nominated as Parish Nominator, Warden or Parish Councillor

Brochures have been developed to provide to parishioners who have been nominated, or who are considering being nominated, for the below roles in the parish:

- [Parish Nominator](#)
- [Warden](#)
- [Parish Councillor](#)

Qualifications for Wardens and Parish Councillors

The qualifications are listed in rule 2.12 for Wardens and rule 2.6 for Parish Councillors.

Rule 2.13(4) (for Wardens) and rule 2.7(1) (for Parish Councillors) refer to the declaration to be made by a Nominee or Appointee. A person who is proposed or nominated needs to complete this declaration in accordance with rule 2.13(5) and rule 2.7(2) otherwise the position may be declared vacant. The office also becomes vacant if the person is convicted of a disqualifying offence while holding office.

This declaration needs to be completed each time (each year) a Warden or Parish Councillor is elected or appointed. Please keep this in mind when filling casual vacancies throughout the year.

Minister's Appointments of Warden and members of Parish Council

The *Parish Administration Ordinance*, rule 3.1(1)(i) or rule 3.1(2)(i) provides for the notification of the name of the person appointed by the minister as a Warden. Rule 3.15 indicates this appointment occurs within 7 days before the election of the Wardens. However, if the minister does not make the appointment at that point in time, he then needs to comply with rule 2.13(3).

Rule 3.16 provides for the appointment of one parish council member by the minister for every three determined to be elected by the AGM. Rule 3.16(2) indicates that the right to make an appointment under sub-rule (1) lapses if it has not been exercised within 28 days after the AGM.

Election of Lay Parish Nominators: [Nomination Ordinance 2006](#)

There is no requirement that a parish meets certain conditions before parish nominators are elected. All parishes that have full parish status can elect parish nominators. However, there are still requirements that need to be met if a parish is to retain its entitlement when a vacancy occurs. Provisional Parishes have no right to elect parish nominators.

Clause 33 deals with the election of parish nominators in a single-church parish and clause 34 deals with the election of parish nominators in a multi-church parish. For a multi-church parish clause 34(3) deals with a variation made at the request of the Parish Council concerning a direction that may be given by your Regional Council in writing.

Clause 36 (2) states if there is currently a vacancy in the office of Rector (there is an Acting Rector appointed or the Archbishop has recently accepted the resignation of the Rector), the nominators elected at the time the vacancy was declared remain in office until a new Rector has commenced. This means there is no need for the Annual General Meeting to elect parish nominators unless one of the nominators has resigned.

Eligibility for election

Clause 32 stipulates who is eligible for election. Ordained Anglican clergy, those employed by the parish or contracted as a staff member and their immediate family members and spouses are not eligible to be elected as parish nominators.

Declarations to be made

Clause 35 refers to the declarations to be made by those who are nominated or elected as a parish nominator. A person who is nominated or elected needs to complete these declarations within 7 days before or after the election.

If a person who is elected does not make this declaration within the requisite time, the office of parish nominator becomes vacant. The office also becomes vacant if the person is convicted of a disqualifying offence while holding office as a parish representative.

Synod Representation: [Synod Membership Ordinance 1995](#)

Synod Representatives are elected for the term of a Synod (three years). The 53rd Synod started last year and those elected at the 2023 AGM will continue until 2025.

You may need to elect Synod Representatives this year if you have any vacancies or are required to elect representatives due to parish re-classifications or amalgamations. If a representative no longer wishes to be a Synod Representative, clause 18(b) of the ordinance requires that they resign by giving a written notice to the Parochial Minister, and the Parochial Minister needs to notify the Registrar (clause 19) of the resignation by email.

The election should be in accordance with the *Synod Membership Ordinance 1995*. Clauses 5A and 6 of the ordinance provide the privacy consent and declaration that needs to be collected and retained by the Rector. A Parish is eligible to elect two lay representatives (clause 10) and Provisional Parishes (clause 11) are eligible to elect one lay representative.

Dates of Synod and the appointment of an Alternate Synod Representative

The dates for Synod this year and an indication of the proposed dates for future sessions are available on the [SDS website](#). If a Lay Synod Representative is unable to attend Synod this year they can appoint an Alternate Synod Representative to attend in their place, refer to clauses 22A, 22B, 22C of the ordinance. The appointment of an alternate is to be made once the Archbishop issues the Synod summons.

Safe Ministry Representative: [Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020](#)

The appointment of Safe Ministry Representatives is not dealt with at the AGM. If you currently have a vacancy this needs to be dealt with promptly. The minister with the concurrence of the parish council **must** appoint a safe ministry representative under clause 17 of the *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020*. Clause 18 lists the qualifications for a safe ministry representative. Clause 17(4) deal with the appointment being revoked or when a representative can no longer hold this position. Information about the role is available to assist the parish in recruiting for this role on the [Safe Ministry website](#). If you have any questions you can submit a request for the Safe Ministry Parish Consultant on the Safe Ministry [contact page](#).

Privacy

The Registry of the Diocese of Sydney is responsible for facilitating the work of the Archbishop. The Diocesan Registry (as part of Sydney Diocesan Services “SDS”) values your continued assistance in maintaining the records held in the Registry database. A copy of the *SDS Privacy Policy* is available [online](#), please have this policy available when declarations are being completed. If you have any further questions please contact me.

Completion of Annual Returns

For the 2024 Annual General Meetings, the submission of those elected and appointed is to be completed online using the 2024 AGM form link under the *Surveys & Forms* tab in the portal for your parish on the SDS site. This should be completed within 7 days after your AGM.

To assist you in collecting all the declarations of those appointed and elected there is a template file that can be download to use or edit as needed. Once signed these declarations are to be kept on file in the parish with your minutes and other records from the AGM.

SDS is committed to providing a range of services designed to assist Wardens, Parish Councillors and Treasurers in the performance of their duties. To ensure your parish officers are advised of these services, training seminars, publications and other parish administration related resources, please ensure that the names and email addresses of each of your parish officers are included in the return. I have provided a checklist for your use to assist you with what needs to be completed, retained and returned.

Prescribed Financial Statements for 2023

Information in relation to the preparation and submission of the parish's audited Financial Statements for 2023 is available in a Circular, dated 6 December 2023 and can be found on the [SDS website](#).

Parishes are encouraged to submit their annual Financial Statements and associated Reports (from the Wardens, Treasurer and Auditor), together with the Declaration of Net Operating Receipts (if required), the Property Income Worksheet, and the Statement of Insurance Policies; this is to be done using the 2024 AGM form link under the *Surveys & Forms* tab in the portal for your parish on the SDS site.

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)

Please be aware of your notification obligations to ACNC as a result of your AGM. If there has been a change in your membership of Parish Council you will need update the Responsible Person/s by logging in to the ACNC portal.

If you have any queries, please refer to the ACNC page on the [SDS website](#).

Useful information for Wardens and Parish Councillors

The SDS website has a [Parish People & Governance](#) section that provides an outline of the duties and responsibilities of the Parish Nominator, Warden and Parish Councillor roles.

Throughout this document, all the links to web pages or emails are hyperlinks and are underlined. If you have any questions concerning annual general meetings contact me or the Assistant Registrar, Dr Stephen McGuinness on 9265 1621 or registryforms@sydney.anglican.asn.au.

With every good wish.

CATHERINE RICH
Diocesan Registrar