

ACT TWENTY-THREE

Of The Parish Vestry Meeting and Office Bearers

Annual Meeting

- 1** (a) The Parishioners of the Pastoral Charge, being eighteen years and older, shall meet in Vestry from time to time, and at least once every year not later in the year than 15 March each year.
- (b) "Parishioner" means any person not being under Church censure who is on the list of Communicants as defined in Article XXIV (10) of the Constitution, read with Section 2 (a) and (b) of Canon 27, in terms of which an habitual worshipper who has been baptised shall also be a parishioner.
- (c) No person whose name is not on the list of Communicants as defined shall be a member of any such meeting in Vestry. The list of Parishioners made, up to and including the previous Easter Day, shall be laid on the table at the Vestry Meeting.

General Powers and Functions of Vestry

- 2** Every Vestry shall have general power to –
 - (a) provide for, settle and control in the first instance all business affairs and expenditure in connection with the Pastoral Charge, save those specially reserved to the Churchwardens and the Parish Council;
 - (b) consider all matters concerning the administration of the Pastoral Charge;
 - (c) exercise all such powers and do all such acts and things as may be done according to the Constitution and Canons of the Province and these Acts.
 - (d) elect the Churchwardens and, if desired, an alternate Churchwarden, subject to the provisions of Canon 29.
 - (e) elect an Auditor or Independent Reviewer for the ensuing year. The Auditor or Independent Reviewer elected by Vestry shall be a person qualified as indicated in Annexure 27 of the Parish Manual.

- (f) elect a qualified and suitable person as Treasurer to assist the Churchwardens with the financial affairs of the parish and in particular the keeping of a record of income (revenue) and expenditure, without detracting from the responsibilities of the Churchwardens.
- (g) decide upon the number of persons who shall serve upon the Parish Council for the ensuing year, and elect such persons, other than *ex officio* members.
- (h) elect Lay Representative(s) to Synod as required by Act 25, as well as Lay Representative(s) to Elective Assembly.
- (i) The Vestry shall, however, exercise all such functions subject to the proviso that the Incumbent shall at all times be recognised as holding office under the Bishop, and as directly responsible to him/her alone in all matters concerning his/her office.
- (j) The functions of the Vestry shall include the care, with the Incumbent of the Parish, in matters affecting worship, ministry, education, evangelism, unity, development and social responsibility.

Financial Functions

- 3** (a) In terms of Canon 27 (6), proper accounts of all parochial finance shall be presented at the Vestry. In this Diocese "proper" accounts shall be accounts drawn up in terms of Diocesan Policy and audited or independently reviewed by the auditors or Independent Reviewers appointed in terms of sub-section 2(e) above.
- (b) After considering the Auditor's report or the report of the Independent Reviewer (which shall be read), approve and pass, or otherwise deal with the audited or independently reviewed Balance Sheet and Accounts. Should the Churchwardens, however, fail to present to the Vestry for its acceptance the Statement of Accounts for the previous year, the Incumbent shall, as soon as possible, report the same to the Archdeacon, who may institute an enquiry. Until such statement has been presented and approved by the Archdeacon, the outgoing Churchwardens shall be held personally responsible for all financial questions which may have arisen during their term of office.
- (c) Approve or amend such estimate of Revenue and Expenditure ("the Budget") as may be submitted to it by the Churchwardens and the Parish Council.

Convening of Meetings

- 4
- (a) A Vestry Meeting shall be convened by notice in writing signed by the Incumbent and Churchwardens. Such notice shall state the place, date, time and objects of the meeting, together with, for the Annual Vestry Meeting, a statement of the functions of the Vestry as set out in Canon 27. Such notice shall be affixed to the door or notice board of all licensed places of worship fourteen days or more before the day appointed therein for the meeting and shall be read by the Incumbent, or a person authorised by himself/herself, or the Archdeacon, in time of Divine Service on the Sunday pre-ceding the day of meeting.
 - (b) No business other than that which was stated on the notice calling the meeting shall be transacted, save that when and where the Parish Council of a Pastoral Charge so desires it, an item called "General" shall be placed on the Agenda for the Annual Vestry Meeting. Under such an item, any matter of general interest to the Pastoral Charge may be discussed; provided that, if there be introduced any matter of which, in the opinion of the Chairperson, previous notice should have been given, no decision thereon shall be made at that meeting.
 - (c) Should the Incumbent so desire, he/she may appoint a deputy as Chairperson of the Vestry Meeting.
 - (d) Should the Bishop or the Archdeacon direct the convening of a Vestry Meeting in terms of Canon 27(1)(c), he/she or his/her nominee shall act as Chairperson of the Vestry Meeting should he/she so determine.

Communicants' Requisition for a Special Vestry Meeting

- 5
- A meeting may be duly convened on requisition in writing to the Incumbent, signed by at least ten Communicants, whose names are on the Register of Communicants, such requisition stating the objects of the meeting; except where there are less than fifty Communicants on the Roll, when five shall suffice. Such meeting shall be convened within fourteen days from the date on which the Incumbent shall have received the requisition.

Quorum

- 6
- Ten Communicants, whose names are on the Register of Communicants, shall form a quorum and no business shall be transacted at any Vestry Meeting unless the quorum requisite shall be present at the commencement of the business.

Vacancies

- 7** In the absence or incapacity of the Incumbent and/or the Churchwardens, the signature or signatures required in each case in terms of Section 4(a), shall be that of a person or persons appointed by the Bishop or Archdeacon. During the vacancy of a Pastoral Charge and at other times, when the Bishop or Archdeacon deems it necessary, he/she or some other person appointed by him/her, shall preside at Vestry Meetings.

Adjournments

- 8** The Chairperson may, with the consent of the meeting, adjourn the meeting to a different time or place, but no business shall be transacted at any adjourned meeting other than the business left unfinished at the meeting from which the adjournment took place.

Vestry Book

- 9** A Vestry Book or books shall be kept by the Churchwardens, wherein shall be entered by the Chairperson, or under his/her directions, minutes of the proceedings at each meeting; and by the persons required to do so under the provisions of any Canon, Act, regulation, or Bylaw, the lists, inventories, terriers and other matters provided thereunder.

Rules of Order

- 10** The Rules of Order of Synod shall be the Rules of Order in all Vestries, save that it shall not be competent for a Vestry Meeting to resolve itself into Committee.

Certificate of Elections

- 11** (a) The Chairperson of Vestry shall notify the Archdeacon within one week of the Vestry meeting of the elections held at Vestry.
- (b) The completed Diocesan Annual Vestry Return shall be submitted to the Diocesan Secretary within one week of Vestry.

Churchwardens/Chapelwardens – Acceptance of Office/Tenure

- 12** (a) Every churchwarden and chapelwarden shall be elected in terms of Canon 29.
- (b) The persons so elected shall sign an acceptance of office as churchwarden or chapelwarden in a form determined by the Bishop.