



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

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## How To...Annual Parochial Church Meeting

These guidance notes are here to help guide and support everyone involved in the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) process. Whether you're preparing for the meeting, managing it on the day, or taking care of the follow-up actions, this document is designed to make things clearer and easier.

It also includes helpful information for Deanery Synod Secretaries and what the Governance Support Team's responsibilities are in **2026**, so that everyone can see how their roles connect and contribute to the wider picture, **which includes Deanery and General Synod elections**. By sharing this overview, we hope to encourage good communication, smooth collaboration, and confidence in carrying out each step of the APCM journey.

If you have any questions or require any support, please do not hesitate to contact the Governance Support Team:  
[governance.support@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:governance.support@bristoldiocese.org).



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## Prior To 31 December in The Year Preceding Deanery Synod Elections

Category	Action	Person Responsible	Rule	Resources
Deanery Synod	Diocesan Synod must approve Deanery Synod election formula	Governance Support Team	<a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 3, Rule 19 (2)</a>	
Deanery Synod	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To give the secretary of each PCC the number of parochial representatives to be elected to Deanery Synod at the annual parochial church meeting of the parish, and</li><li>Give the secretary of each deanery synod a copy of the number of Deanery Synod representatives to be elected to each parish.</li></ul>	Governance Support Team	<a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 3, 19 (4) (a) and (b)</a>	



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Between 1 January and 31 May				
Category	Action	Person Responsible	Rule	Resources
APCM	Schedule date of APCM Must be scheduled between <b>1 January</b> and <b>31 May</b>	PCC Secretary with the guidance of the incumbent	<a href="#">Church Representation Rule M1 (1)</a>	The Diocesan of Southwark has a very helpful tool for working out the various deadlines for APCM work once you have set your APCM date, which you can access here: <a href="#">Southwark Portal</a>



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<b>Prior To APCM</b>				
<b>Category</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Rule</b>	<b>Resources</b>
APCM	<b>Revise the electoral roll and publish</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give notice of the revision of the electoral roll by completing and displaying the Electoral roll revision notice. The notice must remain on display for at least <b>14 days</b> before the proposed revision begins.</li> <li>Display the notices on or near the main door (and on each church in the parish if applicable).</li> <li>The revision of the electoral roll must be completed at least <b>15 days</b>, but no more than <b>28 days</b>, before the annual parochial church meeting.</li> <li>Publish the revised electoral roll (in writing or digitally) for a minimum of <b>14 days</b>. Include names but no other personal information.</li> </ul>	Incumbent/priest in charge or person appointed by them, usually the Electoral Roll Officer (NB different rules apply in a vacancy)	<a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 1, Rule 3 (3) and Rule 4 (10) and Rule 5 (2)</a>	<a href="#">Form 2: Notice for the Proposed Revision of the Electoral Roll (Word)</a>
APCM	<b>Convene the meeting with publicly displayed notices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete both the 'APCM notice form' and the 'Notice of meeting of parishioners to elect Churchwardens' form.*</li> </ul>	APCM Notice – minister	<a href="#">Church Representation Rule, Part 9, M1 and Rule M2 (1)</a>	<a href="#">Form M1: Notice of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (PDF)</a>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Display the notices on or near the main door (and on each church in the parish if applicable). Display for a period of time that covers at least the last two clear Sundays before the meeting takes place.</li> </ul> <p><b>*Churchwarden elections</b> – these technically (legally) happen at a separate meeting from the APCM. The separate meeting is called the <b>Meeting of Parishioners</b> and it can be attended by any member of the civil electoral roll of the civil parish(es), as well as those on the electoral roll of the parish church(es).</p> <p>However, in practice the two meetings often take place on the same evening.</p>	<p>Notice of parishioners – Minister (or Churchwarden in vacancy).</p> <p>PCC Secretary</p>	<p><a href="#">(a) and Rule M2 and M2 (2)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Churchwardens Measure 2001 Section 4 (2) and Section 5(2)</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Form M1: Notice of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (Word)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Notice of a Meeting of the Parishioners (PDF)</a></p>
APCM	<p><b>Approve and publish audited financial statements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PCC should approve audited/independently examined (depending on turnover) financial statements and the chair of the meeting at which they are approved sign them.</li> <li>The accounts referred to are for the year ending on 31 December preceding the APCM.</li> <li>The PCC must also approve the annual report on the proceedings of the PCC. Note that this should</li> </ul>	PCC Secretary	<p><a href="#">Church Representation Rules, Part 9, M5 (1) (c) and M5 (5) (b) and M5 (7)</a></p>	



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	<p>be sent WITH the financial statements to the auditor/independent examiner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>For at least <b>seven days</b> before the APCM copies of the financial statements and the annual report should be published and made available.</li></ul>													
APCM	<p><b>Seek candidates for PCC</b></p> <p>Number of lay representatives on the PCC</p> <table><tr><th>Number on Electoral Roll</th><th>Number of representatives to be elected</th></tr><tr><td>50 or less</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>51-100</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>101 - 200</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>201 or more</td><td>15</td></tr></table> <p>Note that parishes are permitted to set a different (i.e. higher or lower) number of lay representatives to elect, (e.g. a parish with an electoral roll of 101-200 may</p>	Number on Electoral Roll	Number of representatives to be elected	50 or less	6	51-100	9	101 - 200	12	201 or more	15	Incumbent and PCC Secretary	<p><a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 9 Rule M15 (8) (a - b)</a> and</p> <p><a href="#">Part 9 Rule M15 (9)</a> and</p> <p><a href="#">Part 9 Rule M16 (1) (a-b)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Part 9 Rule M16 (2)</a> and</p> <p><a href="#">Part 9 Rule M16 (4)</a> and</p>	<p><a href="#">Nomination of PCC member (PDF)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Nomination of PCC Member (Word)</a></p> <p><a href="#">PCC members declarations (Word)</a></p>
Number on Electoral Roll	Number of representatives to be elected													
50 or less	6													
51-100	9													
101 - 200	12													
201 or more	15													



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	<p>consider 10 rather than 12 representatives to be more appropriate). This is done by passing a resolution at the APCM. Any such resolution, however, will only take effect from <i>the following APCM</i>.</p> <p><b>The term of office of elected lay members of the PCC</b></p> <p>The length of time that an elected member serves on the PCC is three years, with a third of the PCC to be elected each year – unless the APCM decides to retain the system of annual election of the whole PCC. Such a decision, when taken, is <i>effective in the year in which it is passed, and must be reviewed at least every six years</i>.</p> <p><b>Please note:</b> if a new PCC member fills casual vacancy, they only serve the remainder of the time left, not a full three years.</p> <p><b>Declarations that a person is not disqualified from being a PCC member.</b></p> <p>In order to assist in meeting statutory requirements, Forms of Declaration that a person is not disqualified from being a charity trustee, and therefore a PCC member, have been produced for use in parishes from</p>		<p><a href="#">Part 9 Rule M12A (2) (a-b)</a></p>	
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	<p>2019 onwards. These forms replace the previous form, and reflect changes in the regulations. Copies of the updated form, together with a cover note, can be obtained from the resource downloads at the bottom of this page (in the grey box).</p> <p>These forms should be completed and signed by <b>all members of the PCC</b>.</p> <p><i>(They can be printed on one sheet of paper 'back-to-back').</i></p>			
APCM	<p><b>Seek Deanery Synod representatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Number of parish representatives on the Deanery Synod</b> Each year a letter is sent to PCC Secretaries to inform them of the number of places allocated for lay representatives of their parishes on Deanery Synods. The allocation of places is determined by the number of persons on the church's electoral roll and the Deanery Synod Election formula for the time being approved by Diocesan Synod.</li> </ul>	Incumbent and PCC Secretary	<a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 3 Rule 19 (4) (a)</a> and <a href="#">Part 3 Rule 19 (3) (a)</a> and <a href="#">Part 3 Rule 19 (1) (b)</a>	<a href="#">Nomination for election to the Deanery Synod (PDF)</a>  <a href="#">Nomination for election to the Deanery Synod (Word)</a>





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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The term of office of parish representatives on the Deanery Synod</b> The length of time that a parish representative serves on Deanery Synod is three years.</li> </ul>			
APCM	<p><b>Seek nominations for churchwardens</b></p> <p>As explained above, the election of churchwardens technically (legally) happens at a separate meeting from the APCM. The separate meeting is called the <b>Meeting of Parishioners</b>. However, in practice the two meetings often take place on the same evening. If held on the same evening, the meetings must be two distinct meetings and you must ensure the attendees for each meeting are correct.</p> <p>The Meeting of Parishioners and it can be attended by any member of the civil electoral roll of the civil parish(es), as well as those on the electoral roll of the parish church(es), whereas the only lay people whose names are on the parish electoral roll may attend and take part in proceedings of the APCM.</p> <p><b>Number of Churchwardens</b></p>	Incumbent and PCC Secretary	<p><a href="#">Section 5 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001</a></p> <p><a href="#">Section 3 Churchwardens Measure 2001</a></p> <p><a href="#">Churchwardens Measure 2001, Section 1(1) and Section 1 (2) (a) and (b)</a></p>	<a href="#">Nomination for Churchwarden (Word)</a>



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	<p>Usually two churchwardens for each Parish are elected each year.</p> <p>Where a parish has more than one parish church and/or parish centre of worship (designated under Section 43 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011) two churchwardens are to be appointed for each parish church/parish centre of worship.</p> <p><b>Churchwardens' length of service</b></p> <p>Churchwardens are elected for a one-year term of office, but can be re-elected the following year - however, the Churchwardens Measure 2001 created a 6-year restriction the effects of which began to be relevant in 2008.</p> <p>It should be noted that a person is disqualified from being appointed to the office of churchwarden when they have served as churchwarden of the same parish for six years in succession. A person must have a gap of at least two years before serving again.</p> <p>However, the Annual Meeting of Parishioners can pass a resolution to the effect that this section of the Measure shall not apply, which would allow the person in</p>			
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	<p>question to be appointed after the six years has expired. Such a resolution would take effect immediately.</p> <p>The end of the first six-year period, since this rule came into effect, was the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held in 2008. This, therefore, meant that any churchwarden who had served continuously since the Annual Meeting of Parishioners of 2002 could not be re-appointed in 2008 unless the Meeting had passed a resolution specifically overruling this provision in relation to the parish, which would enable them to be reappointed.</p> <p>Any such resolution can be revoked by a subsequent Annual Meeting of Parishioners.</p> <p>If necessary, advice can be obtained from the Diocesan Registrar (<a href="mailto:bristolregistry@stoneking.co.uk">bristolregistry@stoneking.co.uk</a>).</p>			
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At The APCM				
Category	Action	Person Responsible	Rule	Resources
APCM	<p><b>At the meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The minister of the parish (the Incumbent) chairs the meeting, or if they are not present, the vice-chair of the PCC. If the Vice-chair is absent or decides not to chair a person must be chosen by the annual meeting or the Team Rector if the parish belongs to a benefice with a Team Ministry.</li><li>• The annual meeting receives and is free to discuss reports from the PCC:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The report on changes in the electoral roll since the last meeting</li><li>2. An annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish generally</li><li>3. The audited or independently examined financial statement of the PCC for the previous year</li><li>4. A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church (this can be included within the annual report)</li></ol></li></ul>	The Minister (or the vice-chair of the PCC, if the minister is unavailable)	<p><a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 9 M4 (1) (a-c)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 9 M5 (1) (a-e)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 9 Rule M5 (2)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 9 Rule M6 (1) (a-b)</a></p>	<p><a href="#">The legal aspects of convening and running annual meetings are covered in Part 9, section A of the Church Representation Rules</a></p>



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	<p>5. A report on the proceedings of the deanery synod (this can be included within the annual report)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A copy of the electoral roll must be available for inspection at the APCM.</li><li>• Elections take place for: New PCC members (laity) Deanery Synod Representatives Churchwardens*</li></ul> <p>*The election of churchwardens is legally a separate meeting from the APCM, called the Meeting of Parishioners, but it is often held at the same meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appointments: Independent examiner/auditor (this responsibility can be delegated to the PCC, by agreement at the APCM)</li><li>• Questions may be asked by those attending, but only those entitled to attend the APCM may ask a question, unless the APCM determines its own rules of procedure. CRR M7(1) and (2).</li></ul>		<p><a href="#"><u>Churchwardens Measure 2011</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Section 4 (2)</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Church Representation Rules Part 9</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Rule M6 (2)</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Church Representation Rules Part 9</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Rule M7 (1) and (2)</u></a></p>	
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A meeting of the new PCC can be held immediately following the APCM, in order to elect a vice-chair and appoint a PCC secretary and PCC treasurer. However, further business cannot be conducted at this meeting (as it is impossible to give the sufficient period of notice of the agenda to the new members).

Newly-elected churchwardens are entitled to serve on the PCC with immediate effect, even before they have been sworn in by the Archdeacon. The outgoing churchwardens continue to serve as both churchwardens and PCC members until the date of the Archdeacons' Visitation.



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After The APCM				
Category	Action	Person Responsible	Rule	Resources
APCM	<b>Announce the results of elections</b>  Use the Annual Parish Meeting results form and as soon as practicable display in the same places that you announced the meeting for at least <b>14 days</b> .	PCC Secretary	<a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 9 M12 (1-3)</a>	<a href="#">Notification of Election Results (PDF)</a>  <a href="#">Notification of Election Results (Word)</a>
APCM	<b>Return annual report and financial statements</b>  Send signed copy of Annual Report and Financial Statement to the Secretary of the Diocesan Board of Finance. Within <b>28 days</b> of the meeting. Please send the information to <a href="mailto:governance.support@bristoldiocese.org">governance.support@bristoldiocese.org</a> .	PCC Secretary	<a href="#">Church Representation Rules Part 9 M5 (8)</a>	
APCM	<b>Electoral Roll certificate</b>	PCC Secretary	<a href="#">Church Representation</a>	<a href="#">Electoral roll certificate template</a>

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## By 1 July of the Year in which Deanery Synod Elections are held

Category	Action	Person Responsible	Rule	Resources
Deanery Synod	<p>Give the Diocesan Electoral Registration Officer (Governance Support Team) a list of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The names and addresses of the members of the House of Clergy specifying for each member the category of membership under Rule 15 of the Church Representation rules.</li><li>• The names and addresses of the members of the House of Laity</li><li>• The names and addresses of any persons who have been co-opted</li></ul>	Deanery Synod Secretary	<a href="#">Church Representation Part 3 Rule 20 (1) (a) – (b) and Rule 20 (2) (a) – (b)</a>	



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## Year in which General Synod Elections are held

As the House of Laity within each Deanery Synod forms the electorate for electing the Diocese of Bristol lay representatives to General Synod, it's really important that Deanery Synod Secretaries and the Governance Support Team work closely together. This will help us create accurate lists of the House of Laity for each Deanery Synod, ensuring everyone who is eligible to vote in the General Synod elections gets the chance to do so.

Normally, Deanery Synod elections and General Synod elections don't fall in the same year, as they run on three-year and five-year cycles. However, in 2026 they will coincide. Because of the dates set by the Church Representation Rules for Deanery Synod elections and those set nationally for General Synod elections, the turnaround will be very tight.

If you're a Deanery Synod Secretary and have any questions or need support, please do get in touch with us at [governance.support@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:governance.support@bristoldiocese.org) – we're here to help.

Category	Action	Person Responsible	Rule	Resources
General Synod	<p>The Governance Support Team will review the lists of the House of Laity and House of Clergy for each Deanery Synod and compare them with our own records.</p> <p>Once the review is complete, a finalised list of all members for each Deanery will be sent by the Governance Support Team to the relevant Deanery Synod Secretary by <b>14/07/2025</b>.</p>	Governance Support Team		



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General Synod	Each Deanery Synod Secretary must then review their finalised list and confirm to the Governance Support Team that it is accurate by <b>20/07/2026</b> .	Deanery Synod Secretary		
General Synod	Governance Support Team must send the list of electors to the Presiding Officer and Civica (an elections services who will be managing the election) by <b>27/07/2026</b> .	Governance Support Team		
General Synod	Civica will issues invitations to nominate candidates for General Synod on <b>14/08/2026</b>	Civica		
General Synod	Nominations will close on <b>7/09/2026</b>	Civica		
General Synod	If an election is needed, invitations to vote will be sent on <b>21/09/2026</b>	Civica		
General Synod	Deadline for postal votes will be <b>12/10/2026</b> and for online votes will be <b>13/10/2026</b>	Civica		
General Synod	The election count will be held between <b>14-16/10/2026</b>	Civica		



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General Synod	The election results will be declared on <b>19/10/2025</b>	Governance Support Team		
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