

LICHFIELD DIOCESAN REGISTRY
GUIDANCE NOTE
CHURCH REPRESENTATION RULES 2020
(2) ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS

1. This note is one of a group of documents to be produced by the Registry to explore the changes which will come into force on 1 January 2020 when the existing Church Representation Rules are replaced by a completely new set of rules. We will refer to the provisions as 'NewCRR' or 'OldCRR'. The NewCRR are available on the Church of England website, for information. The NewCRR are the Schedule to the Church Representation and Ministers Measure 2019, and are substituted by that Measure for the OldCRR which had their statutory force in the Synodical Government Measure 1969 as amended from time to time.
2. The NewCRR adopts a much more straightforward drafting style, and in many ways will not require much explanation. Steps have been taken to use inclusive pronouns; also to set out requirements in clear numbered or lettered paragraphs rather than in narrative text. However the problem of reading a new set of rules is knowing whether anything has changed, and that can only be achieved by a comparison of the two sets of rules. The purpose of these note is mainly to try to assist those who have responsibilities for different aspects of the CRR to understand what is *different*. We are not, therefore, setting out in detail what the new rules provide.
3. The NewCRR provides a set of Model Rules for parish governance. These are effectively a schedule to the main CRR. Part 2 of the NewCRR provides that the Model Rules in NewCRR Part 9 will apply to all parishes; but it also allows the parish to adopt its own rules through a scheme made by its Annual Meeting, and then approved by the Bishop's Council under NewCRR12. (These schemes will no doubt become known as Rule 12 Schemes! They are to be covered in the note on parish governance; certain of the Model Rules are immutable, including Special and Extraordinary Parochial Meetings; but Annual Meetings are technically capable of being subject to a Rule 12 Scheme). We will refer to the Model Rules simply as M1 etc.
4. The rules governing Annual Meetings (APCMs) are now set out in NewCRR Part 9, Rules M1 to M14.
5. Changes:
 - a. The period for holding the APCM is now extended until 31 May in each year (M1(1)).
 - b. The rule which barred lay persons who were not *entitled* to attend, from attending, is no longer included. The list of persons entitled to attend remains the same as previously set out.
 - c. The NewCRR M2 provides for the notice convening meetings; it must still be displayed on or near the principal door of the parish churches and any building licensed for public worship; in the latter case in a place 'readily visible to members of the congregation'.
 - d. NewCRR M2 provides that the meeting is to be held at a place in the parish, unless the PCC decides otherwise. This means that the OldCRR7(2) requirement that the APCM would fix the date, place and time of the next meeting has disappeared. It will now be for the minister to determine these matters. *Where there is no minister, then the PCC vice chair or (if none) the PCC secretary (or if none) a person appointed by the PCC to convene the meeting.*
 - e. The business for the APCM remains as before, M5; but we would draw particular attention to the requirement in M5(3) that the annual report must contain a statement as to compliance with the duty to have regard to the safeguarding guidance of the House of Bishops, and that the annual report will be in a form specified by the Business Committee of General Synod (M5(4), NewCRR84).
 - f. The financial statements will have to be in a form specified by the Business Committee of General Synod (M5(5)). We would remind PCCs treasurers and ministers who chair PCCs that it is the responsibility of the PCC to ensure that their accounts are examined, and signed off by the chair of the PCC meeting in

- advance of the APCM, and published, all in advance of the APCM. The examined accounts are to be supplied to the DBF within 28 days of the APCM. The only change is that digital publication is now permissible (M5(7)) rather than display.
- g. The OldCRR9(5) provision allowing the APCM to appoint sidesmen (sic) is abrogated. The power is now given to the PCC. A sidesman must be on the electoral roll, and is an assistant to the churchwardens. (See NewCRR schedule 2, para 10).
 - h. NewCRR M8(5) (deanery synod representatives) must be noted; its effect is prospective (M8(6)) but it will mean that only 2 terms may now be served *unless* the APCM decides otherwise – that decision can be taken by the APCM at the meeting in question (M8(7)).
 - i. The OldCRR rule 11(7) as to an entitlement to call for *numbered* voting papers is abrogated.
 - j. There is now a provision expressly stating that the chair of the APCM is the presiding officer for elections at the meeting (NewCRR M9(10)).
 - k. Where postal voting is involved, then a presiding officer still has to be appointed by the APCM – it does not have to be the chair of the meeting itself. The period for sending out postal votes is now extended to 7 days of the close of the APCM but they must still be returned within 14 days of the close of the APCM (NewCRR M11(5)). Note that the postal vote requirements are specified now in that rule.
 - l. Importantly, the GDPR obligations are now specified in relation to the list of elected persons: NewCRR12(5-9). The important change is NewCRR12(8) which means that a person may inspect the list of members, but is not entitled to a copy of it; and the list that is made public must not include any personal data other than names. The secretary of the PCC must, by implication, prepare 2 lists: one with addresses for internal use and to be supplied to the diocese and deanery synod, the other without any addresses or other data.
 - m. The OldCRR22 and 23 provisions are now more sensibly placed in M13 and M14.
6. The meeting of parishioners to choose churchwardens is usually held at the same time as the APCM but is technically a different body of people and a separate meeting. The reference in OldCRR13 is now removed; the applicable legislation, the Churchwardens Measure 2001 should be followed, but it is amended by the NewCRR schedule paragraph 22 to require notices to be displayed in the same manner as for the APCM. The period for holding the meeting of parishioners is extended to 31 May so as to be the same as for the APCM.

Niall Blackie and Andrew Wynne
Joint Registrars
Diocese of Lichfield