

Checklist for Chairmen and Secretaries of Parochial Church Councils voting on The House of Bishops' Resolution

(This should be read in conjunction with detailed guidance found in:

- 'Passing Resolutions under The House of Bishops' Declaration: Advice to PCCs and Parish Priests' published by Forward in Faith and downloadable from: <http://forwardinfaith.com/Advice.php> together with:
- 'Draft Resolution and Statement',
- a 'leaflet for PCC Members',
- a 'sheet for calculating dates by which notice must be given' and
- 'Tables illustrating majorities required for passing resolutions'.
- Further resources are available from <http://forwardinfaith.com> – click on 'RESOURCES' then click on 'The House of Bishops' Declaration'.)

A: Before the Meeting

1. **At least 4 weeks before the meeting** the PCC Secretary MUST give PCC members **notice** including:
 - a. **Date and time of meeting;**
 - b. **Notice of the motion that is to be considered;**
 - c. **the precise terms of the Resolution¹;**
 - d. **any document that the Resolution would approve².**
2. **At least 10 clear days before the meeting** someone (e.g. PCC Chairman/Secretary) MUST:
 - a. **Post a notice specifying the time and place of the intended meeting** at or near the principal door of every church or building licensed for public worship in the parish.
 - b. This notice MUST be **signed** by or on behalf of the Chairman of the PCC (or persons convening the meeting).
3. **At least 7 days before the meeting** the PCC Secretary should **post, deliver or (if authorised by a member) email the FULL AGENDA to every member of the PCC** if this was not included with the notice sent 4 weeks in advance.
4. [NB Any request by a Rural Dean or Archdeacon to attend should be declined as it might unduly influence PCC members. Charing of the PCC meeting by either (unless one happens to be your parish priest) would be unlawful.]

B: The Meeting/The Vote

1. The normal rules apply so that:
 - at least one third of all PCC members (a quorum) must attend and
 - only PCC members (elected, co-opted or ex-officio) are entitled to vote.
2. The number of votes required to pass the Resolution depends on how many PCC members are present:
 - Are 2/3 or more present? – If so a **majority of those present at the meeting** must vote in favour.
 - Are fewer than 2/3 present? If so, a **majority of the entire PCC** must vote in favour³.
[N.B. An abstention, as it is not in favour, counts the same as a vote against.]
3. If the Resolution is passed, it is recommended that a copy of the Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction should be signed and dated by the Chairman.
4. The PCC Secretary should note in the Minutes:
 - How many members attended the meeting;
 - How many voted in favour of the Resolution.
5. As in a vote on any motion, the normal rules apply in that:
 - If one fifth of the PCC members present so require, the PCC Secretary shall record in the Minutes the names of members voting for and against the Resolution and
 - Any PCC member may require the Minutes to record the way his or her vote was cast.

C: After the Vote

6. The PCC Secretary should send a copy (e.g. by post, hand or as an email attachment) of:
 - **The Resolution** and
 - **the Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction** and/or
 - any other document approved by the Resolution to:
 - i. **the diocesan bishop,**
 - ii. **the archdeacon,**
 - iii. **the diocesan registrar and**
 - iv. **the registered patron** (Declaration, para. 20),
and also to
 - v. **the Society Bishop,**
 - vi. **the Bishop's Representative and**
 - vii. **the Forward in Faith office.**

7. The Resolution may be included in a covering letter, in which the PCC Secretary is encouraged to ensure all information is given to show the correct procedure was followed⁴.
8. A Checklist is included at the end of this document⁵.

D: Affiliating the Parish to The Society

9. When a PCC has passed a Resolution, do not forget to consider and apply for parish affiliation to The Society, if you have not done so already. See: <http://www.sswsh.com/Parish-Affiliation.php> or <http://www.sswsh.com/> then click 'ABOUT US' then click 'Parish Affiliation'. Affiliated parishes are also invited to register with Forward in Faith. Please also encourage your congregation to become members of Forward in Faith: See <http://www.forwardinfaith.com/JoinUs.php>

E: Conversations with the Diocesan Bishop

10. The reason the Declaration [para. 22] requires 'consultation between bishop and parish' after passing a Resolution is because:
 - 'the nature of the theological conviction on the ordained ministry of women which underlies a decision to pass such a resolution will vary according to the tradition of the parish concerned', so there will therefore be:
 - a 'need to ascertain the nature of that conviction so that the resolution can be implemented effectively.'
11. Practice varies considerably between dioceses. This consultation may or may not take the form of a meeting. It is not for the diocesan bishop to seek to modify a PCC's theological conviction.
12. The House of Bishops Guidance [Note [GS Misc 1077](#), para 13] recommends that the PCC should appoint one or more of its members to meet with the diocesan bishop in order to articulate the needs of the parish in light of the underlying theological conviction. **We recommend that the PCC always appoints the Parish Priest** (unless he is unsympathetic to the Resolution, or there is a vacancy) **and, if desired, one lay member.**

¹ *The following is recommended by Forward in Faith:*

"[For the sake of the unity of our Parish,] This PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction set out in the statement appended to this Resolution, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests."

² *Forward in Faith suggests the following draft text for a Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction. This is available as a WORD file at <http://forwardinfaith.com/Advice.php> :*

[DRAFT TEXT]

**Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction
under the House of Bishops' Declaration
by the Parochial Church Council of
The Parish of [NAME OF PARISH]**

We reaffirm our desire to flourish within the life and structures of the Church of England, in accordance with the Five Guiding Principles set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration, and our commitment to Christ's mission in the Diocese of [NAME]. We recognize the diocesan bishop and other bishops of this Diocese as the true and lawful holders of their offices, and wish to maintain the highest degree of communion with them that is consistent with the theological convictions that underlie our Resolution.

The theological convictions set out below are held by a significant number of worshippers in our parish. The Resolution will ensure that the episcopal and priestly ministry exercised in our parish is such that can be received with integrity by all who worship here. Our Resolution contributes to the Church of England's 'wider commitment to sustaining diversity'.

Women have always exercised various ministries in the Church. However, those who are unable to receive the sacramental ministry of women as bishops and priests hold that neither Scripture, nor apostolic Tradition, nor the great majority of the Church throughout the world today endorse the ordination of women as bishops and priests. There is therefore doubt as to whether the roles of bishop or priest are, sacramentally speaking, roles that women can exercise. We ask that episcopal and priestly sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish should be exercised by those whose sacramental ministry is not subject to such doubt.

The unique sacramental ministry of a bishop is to ordain bishops, priests and deacons. In receiving their ministry, we receive the ministry of the bishops who ordained them. If there is doubt about the sacramental ministry of women as bishops, there will be doubt about the sacramental ministry of those whom they ordain. **We therefore ask that episcopal and priestly sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish be exercised**

- ❖ **by male bishops at whose consecration a male bishop presided and who stand in the historic, apostolic succession of bishops so ordained, and**
- ❖ **by male priests ordained by such bishops.**

We are pledged to maintain the highest possible degree of communion with the Bishop of [NAME OF DIOCESAN SEE] and the other bishops of this Diocese, and we reject any suggestion that ordaining women to the episcopate and priesthood renders a bishop's episcopal ministry invalid. However, our flourishing requires the flourishing of our priest. We understand that our priest can only flourish if he is in *full* communion with a bishop and with all those whom that bishop ordains to the priesthood – a full communion made visible when he stands together with them at the altar. Therefore **we request that episcopal sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish be entrusted to a bishop who ordains only men to the priesthood.**

Approved by the PCC on [DATE]

[[WHEN PASSED, this should be SIGNED[Chairman]]

³ Table showing relevant percentage of PCC members and the number of votes required to pass a Resolution:

PCC Meeting: Percentage of members present & votes required to pass House of Bishops Resolution				
TABLE A			TABLE B	
PCC Members	ARE TWO-THIRDS OR MORE PRESENT at the meeting?	IF FEWER THAN TWO-THIRDS ARE PRESENT at the meeting	IF TWO THIRDS OR MORE OF PCC ARE PRESENT at the meeting:	
TOTAL NUMBER	Check number in this column against total number of PCC members. Is the number equal or greater? >YES: - Go to Table B (Green) >NO: - Go to next column (Blue) to check votes required against <u>total no. of PCC members</u> in LH column (Grey).	Number of Votes in favour required to pass Resolution. (majority of <u>whole PCC</u>)	Number of Members Present	Number of Votes in favour required. (majority of <u>members present</u>)
8	6	5	5	3
9	6	5	6	4
10	7	6	7	4
11	8	6	8	5
12	8	7	9	5
13	9	7	10	6
14	10	8	11	6
15	10	8	12	7
16	11	9	13	7
17	12	9	14	8
18	12	10	15	8
19	13	10	16	9
20	14	11	17	9
21	14	11	18	10
22	15	12	19	10
23	16	12	20	11
24	16	13	21	11
25	17	13	22	12
26	18	14	23	12
27	18	14	24	13
28	17	15	25	13
29	19	15	26	14
30	20	16	27	14
			28	15
			29	15
			30	16

⁴ *Points to include in a letter to send after passing a Resolution.*

1. Name of the parish;
2. Date of PCC meeting;
3. Number of PCC members present;
4. Total number of PCC;
5. How many members voted in favour of the Resolution, against it and abstained;
6. The precise wording of the Resolution;
7. Assurance that:
 - i. The PCC had been given full opportunity to discuss the underlying theological conviction *[state when]*;
 - ii. At least 4 weeks' notice was given to PCC members of the time and place of the meeting;
 - iii. This notice included:
 - a. notice of the motion to vote on the Resolution;
 - b. the precise terms of the Resolution;
 - c. the 'Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction under the House of Bishops' Declaration' *[and/or any other such document expressing theological conviction]*;
 - iv. A full agenda was included *either* with that notice *or* at least 7 days before the meeting;
 - v. At least 10 days before the meeting a notice giving time and place of the meeting was:
 - a. Signed by or on behalf of the Chairman of the PCC;
 - b. Posted on or near the principal door of every church/building licensed for worship in the parish.
8. Forward in Faith encourages you to express in the letter the parish's continued commitment to engaging in the life of the diocese.
9. Ensure that the 'Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction' *[and/or any other relevant document]* is sent with the letter.

⁵ **CHECKLIST**

WHO	WHAT	WHEN	DONE
PCC Secretary	Send Notice to all PCC Members with full wording of Resolution & Statement of Needs & Theological Convictions	@least 4 weeks before meeting	
Chairman/ Secretary	Attach signed notice of meeting on/near main door of all churches & buildings licensed for worship	@least 10 days before meeting	
Secretary	Send full Agenda to all PCC members (if it was not sent with initial notice)	7 days before meeting	
Chairman/ Secretary	Check whether 2/3 of members present. Check votes required to pass motion	At meeting	
Chairman	If Resolution passed, sign & date statement	At meeting	
Chairman	Ensure PCC decide who will represent them in conversation with diocesan bishop.	At meeting	
Secretary	Write to all people listed (p.2 above) including all relevant information (p.6 above)	After meeting	