

So, you're thinking of becoming a parish councillor



If you are considering standing for the role of a parish councillor, you may have a number of questions about the position. This document outlines some of the key roles and responsibilities of the position, as well as how to access more detailed information.

But first of all, thank you for your willingness to consider serving in this way. Parish councillors play a significant part in the health and good governance of our churches, and of the Diocese as a whole.

It is our prayer that should you be elected at the AGM, your time as a parish councillor will be a blessing not only to God's people, but to you also. May you be inspired by the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who himself took "the very nature of a servant".

So, what actually is a parish council?

Generally speaking, the parish council is the governing body for the financial and property affairs of the parish (and of each church within the parish if there's more than one). Every church in the Diocese has a parish council.

Who's on the parish council?

The parish council consists of:

- The senior minister,
- The three wardens,
- An additional three, six or nine people elected at the Parish AGM, and
- One additional person appointed by the senior minister for every three elected at the AGM (if he chooses to do so).

[Note: Parishes which consist of more than one church will have slightly different arrangements. See the [Parish Administration Ordinance 2008](#) for more detail.]

The eligibility of someone to become a parish councillor is fairly straightforward and is set out in the [Parish Administration Ordinance 2008](#).

Brief overview of responsibilities

As the governing body for the church, the parish council determines matters of policy, authorises payments and approves budgets. These functions includes activities such as:

- Fixing the stipend, allowances and benefits of the ministerial staff,
- Conferring with the minister on the work of the church and making recommendations regarding ministry within the parish,
- Providing oversight on parish building projects and other property-related matters such as leases,

- Directing the expenditure or investment of any surplus funds the parish may have,
- Appointing a qualified person to audit the parish accounts, and
- Determining and facilitating the parish's charitable and mission-related support.

Parish council meetings

A parish council meeting can take place with a minimum of one-third of the council members present. If he is present, the senior minister is the chair of the meeting (unless he is present and delegates the role to another member). Minutes of all meetings must be taken and recorded by one of the members who has been appointed as Secretary.

The parish council may also establish committees to undertake certain functions of the council. These committees may include people who are not members of the parish council itself.

Parish of Figtree expectations

In deciding to stand as a candidate for Parish Council for the Parish of Figtree, you are:

- indicating your willingness to make a three-year commitment to the role
- are available and willing to co-lead, alongside a Ministry Team member, a Ministry Area Team (a sub-committee of parish council)
- Promising to observe appropriate confidentiality especially with information of a sensitive nature, and
- Signalling your intention to make the journey with us into a new (and developing) model of parish governance.

When you finish up

Most parish councillors will finish their tenure when they decide to step down and a successor is subsequently elected or appointed.

However, there are a number of other circumstances under which you would cease to be a parish councillor, including for example if you are absent from three consecutive parish council meetings (and the parish council resolves that your membership should cease), you become bankrupt or mentally incapacitated, or if you are convicted of certain offences.

For more information

This document is intended as an overview only. You should consult the [Parish Administration Ordinance 2008](#) for more extensive and detailed information. The [SDS website](#) also contains lots of information that will help you understand the role of a parish councillor.

And, of course, we encourage you to chat with someone who is either a current parish councillor within the Parish of Figtree or has recently served in the role.

Once again, thank you for your willingness to consider serving in this way and may God guide and bless you in your decision-making.