

Parish of St Mary's Star of the Sea

Sandymount Dublin 4

**Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines**

### **Paragraph 1: Statement**

In accord with canon 536 of the Code of Canon Law, and as directed by the Archbishop of Dublin, the Parish of St Mary's, Star of the Sea, Sandymount, Dublin 4, hereby adopts the following guidelines for its Parish Pastoral Council (hereafter referred to as "the Council").

### **Paragraph 2: Mission Statement for the Parish of St Mary's, Star of the Sea, Sandymount and for the Parish Pastoral Council.**

2.1: The following is the Mission Statement of the Parish of St Mary's, Star of the Sea, Sandymount.

The Parish of Sandymount, under the protection and patronage of Our Lady, Star of the Sea, is founded on the Love and Mercy of God and the teaching of the Catholic faith. We all take responsibility for the life and mission of the parish, co-operating with our Priests and Bishop in whatever way we can.

Our mission is to build a welcoming Catholic Community of love, faith, praise and thanksgiving where everyone is equally included and valued; one that lives its faith, shares it more fully, serves others and tries to transform our society through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We strive to do this through our ordinary life with its joys and suffering; through our study, prayer, liturgies and music; as we prepare and celebrate the sacraments; and as we do spiritual, charitable, and ecumenical work.

We hope that in living our mission, all will come to find joy, peace and fulfilment in Christ.

2.2 The following is the Mission Statement of our Parish Pastoral Council.

The Parish Pastoral Council promotes and nurtures the Faith Life, Mission and Values of St Mary's Star of the Sea Parish in collaboration with its local cluster of parishes, the parish priests, clergy and bishop of the diocese.

Inspired by God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the PPC fosters unity in diversity and builds a sense of community where all are included, welcomed, valued and listened to. It facilitates mutual understanding and respect through ecumenical and inter-faith activities with the broader community.

It encourages everyone to discover and use their gifts generously and responsibly for the welfare of the parish and for reaching out to make the world a better place for all today and into the future. Relying on the gifts of the Spirit as they read the signs of the times together, they join with all in proclaiming and building Christ's Kingdom.

2.3 These Mission Statements shall be reviewed by the Council not less than every three years.

### **Paragraph 3: Purpose of the Council**

3.1 The Council shall provide a formal structure for promoting the pastoral mission of the parish. It shall provide a format for the priests and council members to confer openly and work together in partnership. It shall promote spiritual growth. Through open communication it shall promote harmonious and caring relationships amongst the parishioners and with other parishes within the local parish cluster, deanery and diocese, and with other Christian denominations and the wider community. The foundation of all its actions shall be Christian faith, hope, and love.

3.2 The Council shall engage in a continuous process of pastoral planning which fosters the spiritual and faith well-being and Christian formation and education of the members of the parish. It shall adopt specific goals and develop, revise and implement policies and actions to further those goals. Some of these goals may be expected to extend for periods longer than one year. As necessary and appropriate, and at least annually, it shall evaluate and as it considers appropriate, revise and re-prioritise its goals and activities.

3.3 The Council shall work towards creating a Sandymount Parish Community which gives Christian witness and responds with Christian love, compassion and practical support to the needs of the parish and wider community.

3.4 The Council shall attend to the upkeep and physical presentation of the church building as a fit place for worship and in view of its importance in the liturgical and pastoral care of the parishioners

### **Paragraph 4: Scope of the Parish Pastoral Council**

4.1 The Council, either through its own capacity or through its subcommittees, shall be the consultative, planning, policy formulating body of the parish in the following areas: faith development/formation, liturgy, ecumenical outreach, community building, communication, health and safety, safeguarding of children and vulnerable persons, buildings maintenance, in keeping with the Catholic faith, church and civil law and Dublin diocesan policy. The Council shall provide its support the clergy of the Parish in each of these areas.

4.2 The Council shall have the power to create subcommittees as it deems necessary to develop, promote and give effect to its plans and policies. The Council may appoint parishioners who are not members of the Council to serve on its subcommittees.

4.3. The Council shall, as required or invited by the diocese, nominate an ordinary member or members to represent the Council at the quarterly deanery meetings or at meetings and events of other groups or structures established by the diocese. In doing so, the Council will aspire to be in touch with diocesan pastoral developments and to represent the parish at those meetings or events.

4.4 The Council shall have the power to seek advice and assistance from approved and appropriate external advisers relating to any aspect of its work.

4.5 The Council shall seek to develop ecumenical relationships within the parish, to share ideas and to accept, on behalf of the parish, ecumenical invitations from other Christian communities, representing the parish at ecumenical events as deemed appropriate.

4.6 The Council shall have ongoing links with the Parish Finance Committee. The Finance Committee is independent of the Council. A person who is a member of the Council and of the Finance Committee may be designated as the link person between the Council and the Finance Committee.

#### **Paragraph 5: Membership**

5.1 The Parish Priest or Administrator of the Parish is the President of the Council.

5.2 The Council shall be comprised of at least 8 but not more than 18 members, all of whom are members of the parish and participate in the life of the parish and especially in its worship. Three of these may be appointed to the Council by the Parish Priest or Administrator for a period of up to three years.

5.3 Each year at the Parish AGM, an election shall take place to fill vacancies arising on the Council in accordance with the procedure set out in Paragraph 7.

5.4 The following shall be ex officio members of the Council: the Parish Priest or other person appointed by the diocese as President of the Council, the Parish Curate, Chaplain or deacon, and any and any other person officially appointed by the diocese to serve in the parish. Ex officio members participate fully and equally in all Council decisions.

5.5 The Council shall have the power to co-opt new members, without election, if the need arises, and they shall remain and serve as ordinary members of the Council until the next AGM, when they may go forward for election if one or more vacancies arise.

5.6 Not more than 5 persons may be co-opted to the Council in the course of a year. The number of persons co-opted by the Council together with serving members of the Council elected at a parish AGM shall not exceed 13.

5.7 Ordinary members shall comprise of at least 8 and not more than 13 members who are at least 18 years of age and shall be elected by the members of the parish, or, in accordance with Guideline 5.5, co-opted by the Council. Two places on the Council shall be reserved for representatives aged 18 to 35. Subject to Paragraph 8 of these Guidelines, all parishioners who participate in the life of the parish are eligible to go forward for election to the Council.

5.8 With the exception of the ex officio members, any member of the Council may resign from the Council before the expiry of his or her term on the Council. A person desiring to resign from the Council shall inform the Chair of the Council in writing. The Chair shall place the resignation on the agenda of the next meeting of the Council. The person resigning may, if he or she wishes to do so, attend that meeting as a member of the Council, and that person's resignation shall be deemed to date from the end of that meeting. The Council shall, at that meeting, accept the resignation of the member

5.9 A person who has submitted a letter of resignation may withdraw it up to the point that it is accepted by the Council.

5.10 A person who has resigned from the Council shall

(a) Be deemed also to have resigned from any subcommittee of the Council of which he or she has been a member.

(b) Be eligible at any time following resignation, to be appointed by the Council as a member of any of its subcommittees.

5.11 On the expiry of their terms as members of the Council, persons may be appointed by the Council to serve on any of the sub-committees of the Council.

**Paragraph 6: Nomination of New Members to serve on the Parish Pastoral Council**

6.1. At each AGM, members shall be elected for a term of 3 years to fill the vacancies left by the members whose three-year terms are due to end, or who have resigned, or who have left the parish, or who are otherwise unable to continue as members of the Council.

6.2 At least 4 weeks before the AGM a subcommittee shall be convened to manage all aspects of the AGM and election of new members to the Council including carrying out the requirements of the following paragraphs.

6.3 Parishioners shall be informed of the pending election at least three weeks before election date. This information shall be communicated through the Parish bulletin, the Parish Web site, and through announcement at the Sunday Masses on at least two consecutive weeks.

6.4 Nomination Forms shall be made available to be downloaded from the web site, and shall be available as hard copies in the church and on request from the Parish Office. All nominees must be parishioners and shall indicate on the form their willingness to accept nomination and to serve and be proposed and seconded by two members of the parish faith community who are at least eighteen years of age. The closure date for receipt of nominations shall be Wednesday of the week preceding that of the AGM to allow time for publication of the names of those going for election.

6.5 The names of the persons going for election shall be published in the Parish Bulletin for the Sunday preceding the date of the AGM and also on the parish website to inform parishioners of the nominees prior to the AGM.

6.6 For the purposes of these guidelines, a parishioner shall include any Catholic living in the parish, and any other Catholic who regularly attends and participates in the parish's liturgy and life.

**Paragraph 7: Procedure for election of new members to the Parish Pastoral Council.**

7.1 Each nominee for election to the Council shall be announced at the meeting. The nominees will each be invited to introduce themselves. A nominee should, if possible, attend the AGM to introduce himself or herself, but if unavoidably absent, may be spoken for by one of the proposers.

7.2 If the number of nominees does not exceed the number of vacancies to be filled, majority voting shall apply, and a ballot of the parishioners attending the AGM shall be taken. The ballot shall set forth each nominee's name followed by boxes indicating "for" and "against." Those nominees receiving more "for" votes than "against" votes shall be elected to the Council. Abstentions shall not be counted.

7.3 If the number of nominees exceeds the number of vacancies, plurality voting shall apply, and a ballot of the parishioners attending at the AGM shall be taken to elect from among the nominees the persons who shall serve on the Council, and ballot papers shall be provided to each parishioner in attendance at the AGM.

7.4 Three tellers, none of whom shall be nominees or nominators, shall be appointed by the Annual General Meeting, one of whom shall be the Secretary of the PPC or in the Secretary's absence, or in the event that the Secretary has nominated one of the nominees, another serving member of the PPC.

7.5 If the number of nominees exceeds the number of vacancies, those voting shall cast a vote, in order of choice, the first choice being 1, the second 2 and so on, up to the number of vacancies to be filled.

7.6 The tellers shall determine the total number of votes, regardless of preference, cast for each nominee. Those nominees receiving the most votes shall be deemed elected.

7.7 If there is a tie of votes for the filling of the final vacancy, the tellers shall determine which of those tied received the highest preferences among the votes received, by totalling the order of choice in the votes cast for each of the tied candidates. The nominee with the lowest total (i.e. with the highest preferences) shall be deemed elected.

7.8 The names of those elected, as well as of those continuing their term as members of the Council, shall be announced by the Chair and shall be published on the Parish web site and in the parish bulletin for the next Sunday after the AGM.

#### **Paragraph 8: Terms of Office**

8.1 The term of office for Ordinary Members shall be 3 years.

8.2 A retiring member shall not be eligible to stand for election as a member of the Council until three years have elapsed from his or her retirement.

8.3 Notwithstanding Guideline 8.2, a retiring member of the Council may, be appointed to the Council by the President.

8.5 The new members of the Council shall, subject to any requirements of the law and guidelines of the Church and of the Diocese, begin their term at the commencement of the first meeting following the Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year.

### **Paragraph 9: Officers**

9.1 The officers of the Council shall be the Chairperson (herein referred to as 'the Chair'), the Vice-Chair, the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary.

9.2 The officers shall be selected by the Council Members at the first Council meeting following the AGM.

9.3 Ex Officio members or members appointed by the Parish Priest or Administrator are not eligible to serve as Chair, but may hold any other officer position.

9.4 A person shall serve as Chair, as Vice-Chair, as Secretary or as Assistant Secretary for not longer than two consecutive years.

### **Paragraph 10: Meetings**

10.1 Council Meetings shall open with a period of prayer and conclude with a prayer.

10.2 The President shall preside at the meetings of the Council

10.3 The Chair shall chair and direct the meetings.

10.4 The Secretary shall prepare the minutes of each meeting.

10.5 In the absence of the Chair at a meeting of the Council, the Vice-Chair shall chair and direct the meeting. Should it happen that neither the Chair or the Vice-Chair are in attendance, the Council shall appoint an ad-hoc Chair from among its ordinary members present at that meeting for the purpose of chairing and directing that meeting.

10.6 In the absence of the Secretary at a meeting of the Council, the Assistant Secretary shall fulfil that role. If neither the Secretary nor the Assistant Secretary is present at a meeting, the Council shall appoint an ad-hoc secretary from among its ordinary members for the purpose of preparing the minutes of the meeting.

10.7 A quorum for Council Meetings shall consist of half the total membership of the Council, plus one, with the President, who shall be counted in that number. In the absence of a quorum within 20 minutes after the scheduled commencement of the meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned to a date, not later than two weeks later, to be determined by the Chair.

10.8 Council meetings shall be held regularly, generally at monthly intervals or on occasion more frequently as the Council may decide. During the months of July and August, the Council shall not normally hold a meeting. There shall be no fewer than 10 meetings of the Council annually, not including the AGM.

10.9 Council meetings are not open to persons who are not duly elected, co-opted or appointed to the Council, except as provided in Paragraph 10.10.

10.10. The Chair may invite advisors, consultants or the Chair or any other member or members of any of its subcommittees or of the Finance Committee, or any other person whom the Council considers may be in a position to offer them information or advice, to attend a meeting for specific items or purposes. The specific item or purpose for which the invitation was given shall be attended to at the beginning of the meeting, after which the invitee shall leave before the Council continues with its other business.

10.11 The final day of the Council year is 30<sup>th</sup> November.

10.12 Following the annual election of new Council members at the AGM, the first meeting of the incoming Council shall be convened by the outgoing Chair. The outgoing, continuing and incoming members, whether elected, appointed or co-opted, shall be invited to the meeting to facilitate continuity in the hand-over to the incoming Council. At this meeting the newly elected Council members shall join the members who are continuing as members of the Council in the election of the new officers to the Council. The first item of business shall be the election of the incoming Chair. Upon the election of the Chair, the outgoing Chair shall hand over the conduct of the rest of the meeting to the person who has been elected Chair. The retiring members shall not be eligible to participate or vote in these elections and shall not attend subsequent meetings of the Council.

### **Paragraph 11: Parish Annual General Meeting**

11.1 An Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Parish shall be organised by the Council and held each year during November. The AGM shall take place at a location in the parish.

11.2 At least three weeks' notice shall be given to the Parishioners of the meeting date, time and place. Each parishioner is entitled to attend the AGM.

11.3 Special Council Meetings and Extraordinary General Meetings may be called by the Chair in consultation with the Council President if they consider that circumstances require.

11.4 In the normal course not less than three weeks' notice of the date, time and place of an extraordinary general meeting shall be given to the Parishioners in the Parish Bulletin, on the Parish Web-site and by announcement at the Sunday Masses. However, in a case where a matter arises that requires urgent attention, notice may be given in the Parish Bulletin and on the Parish web-site, and also by announcement from the altar at all Sunday Masses, of the date of a meeting to be held as soon as possible thereafter.

### **Paragraph 12: Relationship of Parish Priest to the Council**

12.1 The Parish Priest or the priest appointed by the Archbishop as being in charge of the Parish shall be the President of the Council.

12.2 The President presides by:

- a) Attending Council Meetings
- b) Giving a report to the Council meetings
- c) Ensuring that the scope of the Council's concerns and policies reflect the mission, ethos, and law of the church and of the diocese.
- d) Enabling the Council build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among Council members and among the parishioners.
- e) Ensuring that the Parish Council Members have the opportunity to obtain adequate training.
- f) Assisting in formulating the Council's agenda
- g) Contributing to the formulation of the Council plans, policies and guidelines
- h) Empowering the Council in the execution of policies and goals that it has adopted.

12.3 In the event that the President has a concern that a Council decision may be in any respect contrary to the mission, ethos, and law of the church and of the diocese the President may suspend the implementation of the decision, giving the Council the reasons for his doing so.

12.4 Following the suspension of a decision by the President, the Council may

- (a) rescind the decision
- (b) modify the decision to take full account of the concerns of the President, or
- (c) request the President and the Chair to seek a determination from the Diocese.

12.5 Any determination resulting from a referral to the Diocese pursuant to Guideline 12.4(c) shall be final. In the meantime, the suspension on the implementation of the action shall remain in effect.

12.6 The President or persons nominated by the President to the Council do not chair the Council Meetings.

12.7 In the event of an extended absence of the President, the Chair shall, as soon as the issue comes to light, request the Diocese to make an appropriate temporary appointment.

### **Paragraph 13: Manner of Operation of the Council**

13.1 The Council's manner of policy and decision making shall be through open consultation, which includes prayerful reflection, gathering information, dialogue and shared responsibility.

13:2 The Council may, if it considers it desirable, provide itself with standing orders, consistent with these Guidelines, for the conduct of its meetings and business and for its own management. It may revoke, revise or amend such standing orders.

13.3 The method of reaching conclusions shall be through discussion and the establishment of consensus.

13.4 Where a decision of the Council on a matter is necessary within a limited timescale, but following discussion and due time for reflection, no consensus has emerged, the Chair may, at his or

her discretion, call a vote by a show of hands, but shall not vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall exercise a casting vote.

**Paragraph 14: Subcommittees**

14.1 Subcommittees shall be formed by the Council where deemed necessary to progress the work of the Council.

14.2 The Council may dissolve or suspend a subcommittee, and shall notify the Chair of the subcommittee accordingly.

14.3 Each subcommittee shall have a written brief and subcommittee Guidelines, which shall be approved by the Council.

14.4 The Council shall nominate one of its members as Liaison Officer to each subcommittee and shall appoint the Chair of each subcommittee.

14.5 The Chair of each subcommittee shall report to the Council, in a frequency as stated in its brief and Guidelines

14.6 Each subcommittee shall keep concise written minutes of its meetings.

14.7 If a subcommittee considers that it requires a decision or guidance regarding the policies or objectives of the Council, it shall refer the matter in writing to the Chair, who shall respond having consulted the Council.

**Paragraph 15: Roles and responsibilities of Officers of the Parish Pastoral Council**

15.1 The Chair

(a) Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the Council and communicates these to the Council, its subcommittees, and the parish community.

(b) Organises and coordinates the activities and work of the Council.

(c) Prepares the meeting agenda in consultation with the Council President and other Council Officers.

(d) Submits the agenda for the next meeting of the Council to the Council members at least three days prior to that meeting.

(e) Provides information for new Council Members and facilitates their induction into the Council.

(f) Facilitates Council meetings by helping the members work together and participate in discussion and decision making.

(g) Chairs the Parish AGM and extraordinary parish meetings

- (h) Presents the Annual Report of the Parish Pastoral Council at the AGM.
- (i) Monitors implementation of the Council's policies and decisions.
- (j) Ensures that projects proposed by the PPC that require funding are presented to the Finance Committee, together with an estimate of the funding required, to establish if the Finance Committee is agreeable to such funding
- (k) Assists the new Chair in understanding the Council history, responsibilities, and resources.
- (l) Upon completing the term of office as Chair, transfers all council material proper to the Chair to the new Chair.
- (m) Performs any other duties appropriate to the office of Chair as the Council or the President may request.
- (n) Shall not chair any subcommittee of the Council or the Finance Committee.

#### 15.2 The Vice-Chair

- (a) Conducts meetings and undertakes duties of the Chair as necessary in the absence of the Chair.
- (b) Supports and, where necessary, delegates for the Chair in carrying out the duties of his or her office, subject to availability, as requested by the Chair.

#### 15.3 The Secretary

- (a) Prepares and submits to the Chair draft minutes of each meeting of the Council within one week of the meeting
- (b) Ensures that they are amended to include any modifications proposed by the Chair and are made available to the Council Members within two weeks of the meeting.
- (c) In consultation with the Chair, prepares a summary of each meeting of the Council for publication in the parish bulletin.
- (d) Records attendance at meeting and records absences and apologies.
- (e) Maintains the official list of council officers and members, their contact details and their terms of office, and prepares and keeps lists and contact details of all current subcommittee Chairs and members.
- (f) Works with the communications subcommittee with regard to changes in Council and subcommittee officers and members to enable the communications subcommittee to update that information.
- (g) Informs the diocese of any changes to the list of Council members and Officers.

(h) Reports to the council all communications received and handles correspondence for the Council, including agendas, minutes, notifications of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks etc.

(i) Prepares and presents at the Parish AGM the minutes of the previous AGM.

(j) Performs such other duties consistent with the office as the Council Chair may request.

(k) The Secretary shall not chair any subcommittee of the Council or the Finance Committee, or serve as Secretary to the Finance Committee.

(l) at the end of his or her term of office, the Secretary shall ensure that copies of the minutes of the PPC meetings held during that term shall be archived in the Parish Office.

#### 15.4 The Assistant Secretary

(a) Supports the Secretary in carrying out the duties of his or her office.

(b) Undertakes the duties of the Secretary as necessary in the absence of the Secretary.

### **Paragraph 16: Adoption of and amendments to these Guidelines**

11.1 These Guidelines may be adopted or amended at any ordinary, special or extraordinary meeting of the Council by consensus, and thereafter by approval of a majority vote on a show of hands by parishioners in attendance at the AGM, subject to subsequent approval by the Diocese.

11.2 Proposed amendments to the Guidelines shall be made available to the parishioners, at least one week prior to the AGM, for discussion and approval by a majority vote on a show of hands at the AGM.

11.3 The Parish Pastoral Council shall, at least every five years, consider whether a review of these Guidelines is required.