

# Constitution Template

*(Must be written by the PPA according to local circumstances and following deliberations in keeping with the Diocesan norms for Parish Pastoral Assemblies)*

TITLE: Constitution of (insert name) Parish Pastoral Assembly

## DEFINITION

The Parish Pastoral Assembly (PPA) is a Parish group which exists to ensure that we focus on our vocation as Christians: the continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ in our time and place. One question is at the heart of the work of every Pastoral Assembly: where and how is God calling us as a Catholic community? In this respect they we called to do three things:

- **Review** Pastoral Matters: in other words to find out what is happening in the Parish and to ask what else could be happening
- **Reflect:** we pray, discuss and discern these matters
- **Recommend:** we recommend practical ways forward to enhance the mission of the Parish according to our planned Pastoral Themes

In the Code of Canon Law, the Assembly [Council] is described as ‘consultative’ to the parish priest (**Canon 536**). The use of the word ‘consultative’ reminds the Pastoral Assembly that it is the Parish Priest who has ultimate responsibility for decisions regarding the overall mission of the Parish. Together we are co-responsible for building a vital Christian community focused on living and promoting the Gospel values of love, justice and peace. The Gospel mandate of mutual love, listening and understanding should prevail among all members of the Parish Pastoral Assembly.

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Examples below (please adapt as necessary):*

“Inspired by the Holy Spirit and guided by God’s love, the Parish Pastoral Assembly of the Parish of (insert name) aims to enable parishioners to move closer to God and to promote an inclusive, vibrant Parish.”

“We, the Pastoral Assembly of the Parish of (insert name), inspired by the love of Jesus, will develop a vibrant and inclusive spiritual community which welcomes the active participation of everyone in the faith life of the Parish.”

## **PURPOSE**

To assist the Parish Priest in his leadership role of planning, organising, initiating, promoting, coordinating and reviewing evangelism, worship, religious education and various spiritual, pastoral or communal activities within the parish.

## **AIMS**

The PPA will aim to fulfil its role by:

- Growing in knowledge and awareness of what is already happening in the parish.
- Encouraging and supporting the good work of existing groups within the parish.
- Searching out and responding to the hopes, ideas, needs and concerns of parishioners.
- Evaluating information gathered in order to inform decisions that reflect the values of the Gospel and teachings of the Church.
- Setting long and short-term goals for the parish, taking into account the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
- Providing opportunities for parishioners to grow in their relationship with God and with each other.
- Developing, implementing and improving parish initiatives that assist parishioners in their continuing efforts to live as effective Christians in society.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

- The Parish Priest/ Administrator will be an *ex officio* member and will be the President of the PPA.
- Any assistant priest assigned to the Parish, an assigned Parish Religious or other pastoral associates appointed by the Bishop are *ex officio* members.
- The PPA will have a four year term of office during which some members of the PPA may retire with new members selected.
- Members of the PPA (excluding *ex officio* members) will serve for a maximum of two terms of office before being required to retire for at least one further term before being eligible for consideration for membership once more.
- Including *ex officio* members there will be a minimum of eight and a maximum of fifteen members of the PPA, all shall be aged 18 years or older and drawn from those who are:
  - Baptised as a Catholic, or a previously baptised non-Catholic who has been formally received into the Catholic Church
  - Practising their faith
  - In full communion with the Catholic Church
  - A regular attender of Mass in the Parish
  - Supporting the Parish through giving of time, energy and finances
  - Aware of the nature, role and work of the PPA
  - Understanding that he/she will be working as part of a team

## **THE METHOD OF SELECTING PPA MEMBERS SHALL BE AS FOLLOWS:**

Enter the way(s) in which the PPA will be formed (e.g. by appointment by the Parish Priest, by ministries, by open meetings (discernment), by a Whole Parish Approach (nomination) etc)

A **Chairperson, Vice Chairperson** and **Secretary** will be appointed from among the PPA members. An office bearer will hold office for no more than one 4 year cycle of the PPA. A full list of appointees will be displayed on the notice board in the church porch.

The Parish Priest will be responsible for enabling the process of discernment for the appointment of office bearers for the PPA and replacing office bearers when a position becomes vacant or is not being fulfilled.

Any member who misses more than three consecutive meetings without explanation will be deemed to have resigned from the PPA and will be replaced in accordance with the method of selecting members.

Each person appointed to the PPA will receive a copy of this Constitution and the Diocesan norms for Best Practice for Parish Pastoral Assemblies.

A priest delegated by the Bishop to have oversight of the Parish in the legitimate absence (e.g. sickness, administrative / sabbatical leave) or death of the Parish Priest and/or pending the appointment of a new Parish Priest, will act as President of the PPA. In these circumstances the PPA will remain in existence with the permission of the Bishop.

When a new Parish Priest or Administrator is appointed the PPA ceases to exist. There are two of options open to the new Parish Priest:

- In the interest of continuity in the parish's work and mission, the new parish priest can reconvene the Parish Pastoral Assembly at the earliest opportunity but for no longer than two months of his appointment to aid his transition to the new parish.
- The new Parish Priest may decide to form an entirely new Parish Pastoral Assembly and run a new process (according to the Diocesan Norms and existing PPA Constitution) to establish a new PPA. This new PPA must be in place as soon as is practicable.

## **EXECUTIVE GROUP**

There will be an Executive Committee, consisting of the Parish Priest, Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary. They will be responsible for agreeing the agenda of each meeting and the on-going formation of the PPA.

## MEETINGS

- Meetings will be held *[insert frequency]*, or more frequently as required, and will start and end with prayer. Meeting dates will be publicised in advance.
- Items for the agenda may be sought from individual Parish Pastoral Assembly members and parishioners. Any such item is to be submitted in written form to the Parish Pastoral Assembly secretary at least fourteen days in advance.
- The agenda and previous minutes will be circulated to members one week in advance of the next meeting.
- Meetings will normally last for no more than two hours.
- Recommendations of the PPA will be made through working towards discerned consensus when possible, taking account of the views of each member of the PPA and arriving at an agreement. *[expand on this section according to the conclusions reached in deliberations on decision making]*
- A quorum at Assembly meetings shall comprise 50% of members plus one, excluding *ex officio* members and should include at least one Office bearer.
- The Assembly shall have power to appoint sub-committees.
- As President of the PPA, the Parish Priest may decide to convene and chair an extraordinary meeting as he considers it necessary.

## ANNUAL REPORTING

The PPA will provide an annual report to the Bishop.

*(See Appendix II of the Diocesan norms for the format of this report).*

## PLANNING DAYS/ DAYS OF RETREAT

*Populate this section taking into consideration the Diocesan Norms e.g.*

*“Each Parish Pastoral Assembly will have at least one full day’s training/ reflection/ planning per year. This is an opportunity to deepen their understanding of their mission; to develop their pastoral themes for their Parish and to bond together as a group. These days should be prayerful as well as business like. Parish Pastoral Assemblies may give consideration to these days being facilitated by someone outside their own Assembly.”*

## **DEVELOPING A PASTORAL PLAN**

*Populate this section taking into account what is written in the Diocesan norms e.g.*

*“Through consultation with the people of the Parish, the Assembly develops a Plan to enable the people to grow in their relationship with God and the Church. This plan identifies priorities for action and energy, and builds on previous initiatives in the Parish, so that what has already taken place is respected and used as the foundation for further growth. Regular and on-going communication and consultation with*

*people in the Parish is vital, both during the development of the Plan and in its implementation and evaluation. This ensures that the Plan reflects and responds to the hopes and concerns of the people, and that the Pastoral Assembly finds willing co-workers to enable the Plan to be made a reality.”*

## **AMENDMENT OF THIS CONSTITUTION**

The Constitution may be amended by the PPA with the approval of the Parish Priest and the Bishop.

## **ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP**

The following are members of the Parish Pastoral Assembly in the parish of (*insert name*):

*This Constitution has been approved by Bishop Tom Deenihan, Bishop of Meath.*

**SIGNED:**

**+ Tom Deenihan**

**Bishop of Meath**

**DATE:**