

PARISH COUNCILLORS

What is a parish councillor? Generally speaking, the parish council oversees and aids the work of the wardens to help govern the financial and property affairs of the parish. There can be 3, 6 or 9 persons elected by the annual general meeting to be parish councillors. One further person is appointed by the minister for each 3 persons elected by the annual general meeting

Who can be a parish councillor? You can be a parish councillor if you are –

- An active member of the church
- at least 18 years of age; and
- a communicant member of the Anglican Church of Australia.

You cannot be a parish councillor if you are –

- bankrupt; or
- a patient or protected person under the Mental Health Act or Protected Estates Act, or
- a prohibited person under the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act. (No later than 7 days after becoming a parish councillor you must make this declaration – *“I declare that I am a communicant member of the Anglican Church of Australia and am not a prohibited person within the meaning of the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998.”*)

When do you cease being a parish councillor? You are a parish councillor until your successor is elected or appointed at the next annual general meeting, or if you resign, become bankrupt, become a patient or protected person under the Mental Health Act or Protected Estates Act, become a prohibited person under the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act, or fail to make the declaration referred to above upon or within seven days after becoming a parish councillor.

What are the responsibilities of a parish councillor? The main responsibilities of a parish councillor include:

- helping the wardens to fix the stipend, allowances and benefits of the minister and (with the minister’s consent) the stipend/ salary, allowances and benefits of any assistant minister, lay minister, student minister or other lay worker;
- doing all things necessary to enable the wardens to comply with their responsibilities concerning minimum standards of maintenance for State Heritage listed buildings.
- determining matters of policy, approve budgets and authorise payments in controlling the funds and property of the church. (It is important to note that the wardens exercise their responsibilities subject to the parish council’s authority in these areas. If the parish council decides to exercise its authority in these areas, it should not do so in a way which prevents the wardens from properly exercising their responsibilities.)
- directing the expenditure or investment policy of any of the parish’s surplus funds;
- conferring with the minister in the initiation, conduct and development of church work and making recommendations on ministry within the parish;
- considering any measure or project that is likely to affect the general interests of the parish and to take proper action on these matters;
- ensuring that minutes to be kept of the parish council’s meetings;
- appointing a qualified person to fill any vacancy in the position of auditor of the statements and accounts of the wardens;
- filling casual vacancies which occur among its elected members;
- making donations for charitable purposes or for the purposes of a Christian mission society whether local or foreign, Anglican or non-Anglican.