

Notes on Conducting a Parish Annual Meeting

Section references are to **Canon Six**:

<https://nb.anglican.ca/legislation>

Timeframe: Between 1 January and the third Sunday in March [2(1)]. The meeting cannot be held without three weeks' prior notice of the date being posted in a "conspicuous" place in each house of worship [2(9)] and until "reviewed" financial statements and a proposed budget are available: [2(1)(d) & (e)]. The meeting may be held on any day, including Sunday. It may be held in person, on Zoom (or similar) or even by conference call. (No parish corporation business that involves voting, including an annual meeting, can be done by *email*.) If an in-person meeting is held, it should be in a setting conducive to transaction of business.

Annual Reporting: Copies of an Annual Report [4(1)(k)] should be available to parishioners prior to the meeting as well as posted on the parish website, if any. Among annual reporting inclusions are the following requirements:

- A listing of any restricted trusts of which the Parish Corporation is trustee, stating the spending restrictions of each of those trusts [4(1)(k)].
- A special listing of the endowments/trusts for *each* of the parish cemeteries, stating any spending restrictions [Reg 6-3]
- A report on the prior year's parish corporation financials, preferably as prepared by a professional accountant [4(1)(k.1)].

As well, up-to-date maps of each of the **parish's cemeteries** are to be produced for inspection at annual meetings. [Reg 6-3]

Chairing: If the Bishop has explicitly licensed someone as parish "Incumbent" (or "Rector"), then s/he chairs the meeting [2(12)]. If the parish has a clerical non-Incumbent, then s/he is *eligible* to be elected chair of the meeting [1(3)]. When a parish is vacant, the bishop or the archdeacon may act as chair if s/he chooses [4.1(1)]. In any other case, the meeting elects someone to preside. Church legislation is silent on whether the chair (if the chair in question is a qualified parishioner) may vote.

Agenda: The draft agenda for the meeting is prepared jointly by the Incumbent and the church wardens [7(e)]. It is good practice to include an agenda item to address mission/planning/priorities for the coming year and to hold this discussion *prior* to election of new parish officers.

Who may attend? Voting members of the parish [2(10)]. Other persons may attend if the meeting permits. These others may not vote or introduce/second motions. They may address the meeting only if the meeting permits.

Who may vote? Baptized Christians who are at least 16, who worship and have been regular communicants in the parish, and who were regular contributors, financial and otherwise, to the mission of the parish during the previous year [2(10)]; but no one can be a voting member of more than one parish [2(11)]. There is no provision for proxy voting.

Elections: Elections to the parish corporation and for Synod delegates are conducted by secret ballot.

Election of Parish Wardens: Parishes have two church wardens (there may also be chapel wardens, as chosen by the relevant congregation members), who are of equal status (not senior/junior). The two wardens cannot be of the same household [2(3.1)]. Terms of office may be for one year or multiple years, as the meeting decides. Wardens must be lay voting members [2(10)]; clerics – active or retired -- are ineligible. No warden may serve for more than 5 consecutive years [2(4)]; but if both wardens are caught by this term limit, then one of them may serve a 6th year [2(5)].

Election of Vestry: *First*, the meeting adopts a motion to establish the size of the vestry, which can be any number between 6 and 12 [2(1)(a)]. (The cleric, if any, and the two church wardens are not included in the count of vestry members.) **Eligibility for Election:** Members of vestry must be lay voting members [2(1)] (see **Who may vote?**). There are no formal restrictions on what particular congregation candidates come from or any other such limitation. There are also no term limits on Vestry service but there should be some annual turnover in membership. If the parish is able to send “youth” delegates to Synod then good practice suggests it should also be electing youth to Vestry.

Election of Synod Delegates: Parishes are entitled to have 2 delegates and 2 substitutes unless one of the delegates is, at the time of election, between 16 and 35. In that case, they may elect a 3rd synod delegate. (However, parishes cannot send 3 delegates to synod unless one of the delegates *actually attending* the synod is a youth delegate/substitute.) All (not just one) of the delegates elected may be between 16 and 35. **Term Limit:** Note that someone who *attended* the Synods of 2019, 2022 and 2024 as the parish’s representative is now ineligible to be chosen as a parish delegate or substitute until after a further regular synod has taken place [Constitution, s.4(1.1)].

Treasurer, Vestry Clerk, Parish Advisory Committee: These appointments are made at the first meeting of the new Parish Corporation, not at the Annual Meeting [4(1)]. See “Notes on Meetings of the Parish Corporation”.