

Parish Name

Pastoral Council Mandate (Sample of best practice)

1. Nature and Purpose

- a) The Parish Pastoral Council of is established in accord with the decision of the Archbishop of Wellington that each parish in the Archdiocese is to have a Pastoral Council.
- b) The Parish Pastoral Council is a structure of participation in which the shared responsibility for the mission of the church and the genuine equality and action of all the baptised is encouraged in a collaborative relationship between Parish Pastoral Leadership Team, lay and ordained, and parishioners. It is a consultative and advisory body, pastoral in nature that assists the Pastoral Leadership Team as it strives to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit among God's people in the parish. It is in this context that Canon 536 should be understood and applied.
- c) The Pastoral Council is a representative body, not a body of representatives. All members of the Pastoral Council, whether representative of particular parish constituencies or not, represent first and foremost all the members of the parish. The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to advance the Catholic faith by fostering the authentic expression of the nature of the parish:

“The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey and a centre of constant missionary outreach”

Pope Francis, *Evangelium gaudium* 28

- d) The Parish Pastoral Council’s purpose is to enhance the process of:
 - Pastoral planning
 - Developing pastoral services
 - Improving pastoral services
 - Evaluating the pastoral effectiveness of various programmes and services
 - See also Section 4

2. Composition and Structure

- a) As per Canon #512 (2), the members of Christ’s faithful assigned to the Parish Pastoral Council are to be selected in such a way that, as far as possible, that they truly reflect the entire composition of the People of God within the parish, taking into account the different regions, social conditions, and professions.
- b) The Parish Pastoral Council membership should consist of not less than 6, or more than 15 members, as follows:
 - i. Two members selected by each church committee in a manner which each committee decides. For the first selection the Parish Pastoral Councils of the amalgamating parishes will act as the church committees;

- ii. Members are to be chosen so as to truly reflect the wisdom of the parish community;
 - iii. The members of the Pastoral Leadership Team are ex-officio members of the parish council, there by virtue of holding office. As many of the Pastoral Leadership Team, appointed by the Archbishop, as is decided by the Pastoral Leadership Team will be appointed to the Parish Pastoral Council;
 - iv. Two members of the parish selected by the Pastoral Leadership Team, for purposes of balance or the need for particular representation that takes into account gifts and talents.
- c) One or more persons may be co-opted onto the Council for a specific purpose for a period of no longer than six months (renewable).
- d) The Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council is selected by the members of the Council and may be any member of the Council or from outside the Council. If from outside the Council he/she becomes a member of the Council with the voting rights of a member, but not with a casting vote.
- e) If the role of Secretary is carried out by one of the parish staff, and is to be included in that person's job description, in this case the Secretary is not a member of the Council.
- f) The term of office for all members of the Council, including the Chair, is two-years, renewable once; or one three-year term. A person may be re-selected as a member or as Chair after an absence of one term.
- g) The term of a member is deemed to have expired if that member is absent from the Council for two consecutive meetings or for three meetings in one year, without having sought leave of the Council. At the discretion of a member of the Parish Pastoral Leadership Team and the Chair, leave may be granted retrospectively.
- h) If a member resigns from the Council during their term of office they are to be replaced for the balance of the term. The replacement member will be selected in the same way as the resigning member was selected.
- i) Each church community may have a church committee which carries out those functions necessary to sustain the life of its community, which is informed by decisions that affect the wider community.
- j) The church committees are committees of the Parish Pastoral Council, and work with the Council to implement the Council's decisions and to foster the unity of the parish.
- k) Each church community decides how many members the committee will have, how often it will meet, and its specific tasks.
- l) The Parish Pastoral Council may form other committees or ad hoc groups for specific purposes as it sees fit.

3. Meetings and decision-making

- a) Collaboration in Ministry is about service, not power. The goal of working collaboratively is to animate the gifts of the entire people of God and further the mission of Christ.
- b) Members are expected to participate in an ongoing formation process. On-going formation at parish level may include an annual evening of recollection and other prayer experiences. In addition, the diocese may offer regular presentations, for example on pastoral planning, goal-setting, visioning, conflict resolution and discernment.
- c) The Council does not deal with acts of administration. Acts of administration are defined as the daily operations of the parish.
- d) A spirit of prayer and reflection is to pervade the meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council. An appropriate time (15 minutes is suggested) is to be taken in each meeting for formation of the members and for nourishing their faith through prayer.
- e) Meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council will be held at least five times per year, with a suitable period of notice given to members of the dates of meetings. Consideration could be given to holding at least one meeting each year in each of the communities.
- f) The agenda for meetings is prepared by the Chair in consultation with the Pastoral Leadership Team members on the Council, and taking into account any matters raised by Council members. The agenda is made available to members at least three-five days before the meeting.
- g) Minutes are to be taken of all Council meetings. A copy of the minutes is to be made available to parishioners and archived as part of the parish permanent record.
- h) A quorum is half of the members, who are not members of the Pastoral Leadership Team, together with a member of the Pastoral Leadership Team on the Council.
- i) Substitution of members at Council meetings is not permitted.
- j) The Chair is to take particular care during meetings to involve and hear those who are quieter, or for whom English is an additional language or members who have disabilities. All members of the Council have a responsibility to ensure all voices are valued and listened to.
- k) The Council will endeavour at all times to reach its conclusions by consensus, a method that is most conducive in discerning and implementing God's will.
- l) Although the Council is not a body which makes binding decisions, the recommendations of the Parish Pastoral Council are to be taken seriously when grounded in prayer, discernment and communal wisdom.

- m) The Parish Pastoral Council does not formulate policy independently of the Pastoral Leadership Team, and the Pastoral Leadership Team seeks not to formulate parish pastoral plans or policy independently of the Council, except in relation to canonical matters.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

The primary duties and responsibilities of the Pastoral Council are to:

- a) Foster unity and a community spirit in the parish, and an evangelizing focus among parishioners.
- b) Respect the diversity of communities within the parish and the application of the principle of subsidiarity¹, in the context of strengthening the unity of the whole parish.
- c) Encourage the exercise of a preferential option for the poor in the parish and in the wider community, creating conditions for marginalised voices to be heard, defending the defenceless and assessing lifestyles, policies and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor.
- d) Discern the needs of the whole parish and its members, including young people; develop and implement a pastoral plan, in consultation with the Finance Committee, which will promote the common good of the parish and its outreach; and oversee the implementation and evaluation of the plan and its outcomes.
- e) Coordinate parish activities in a manner that will best serve the interests of the parish and its mission, remembering always that there are parishioners whose circumstances require special attention if they are to participate fully.
- f) Foster partnership between the parish and its schools.
- g) Promote ecumenical activities and participation in them by parishioners.
- h) Promote participation in programmes and activities recommended by the Archbishop, Archdiocesan Offices, and the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference and its agencies.

5. Use of financial resources

- a) All income, benefit, or advantage must be used to advance the charitable purposes of, and in accordance with the norms of the Archdiocese of Wellington.
- b) No member of the Pastoral Council of or anyone associated with a member, is allowed to take part in, or influence any decision made by the organisation in respect of payments to, or on behalf of, the member or associated person of any income, benefit, or advantage.
- c) Any payments made must be for goods or services that advance the charitable purpose and must be reasonable and relative to payments that would be made between unrelated parties.

¹ Principle of Subsidiarity – ‘Those things that can be decided at the lowest possible level are decided at that level unless the lower level requires direction or support’.

6. Amendments to the Mandate

- a) Amendments to this mandate duly proposed and seconded must be carried by a 75% majority of the total current membership of the Pastoral Council.
- b) Thirty days' notice of such amendments must be given to all members of the Council.