

# Parish of St Mary Magdalen & St Teresa, Penwortham,

within the Family of Parishes of Tarleton, Longton, Penwortham, Farington, & Leyland,  
within the Deanery of Lancashire of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

## Parish Synodal Council

v.230712

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of the Parish Synodal Council is to study and weigh those matters which concern the pastoral works in the parish, and to propose practical conclusions concerning them, in order to give their help in fostering pastoral action (cf. Can. 511.1 & Can. 536.1).
- 1.2. The Parish Synodal Council is to share with and assist the Parish Priest in the pastoral care of the Parish (cf. Can. 536.1).
- 1.3. The Parish Synodal Council (PSC) is an advisory body with a consultative vote only, which will make recommendations to the Parish Priest. It may also initiate and carry out such works as may be approved by the PSC and the Parish Priest (cf. Can. 536.2).
- 1.4. The Parish Priest will give most careful consideration to recommendations made by the PSC and will accept them unless in his opinion there is a proportionally serious reason to the contrary.
- 1.5. When the Parish Priest does not accept a recommendation made by the PSC he shall always give a clear explanation of the reasons for not so doing, saving always the requirements of confidentiality.
- 1.6. Definitions:
  - 1.6.1. Synodal – means to ‘be on the road together’. A synodal council is one in which all the baptised can participate. Pope Francis has said that, “a synod is not like a ‘parliamentary structure’ (nor a ‘committee structure’) but is best understood as a liturgical assembly that seeks to listen to the Holy Spirit”.
  - 1.6.2. Pastoral – comes from the word ‘pastor’ meaning ‘shepherd’ and refers to the care of individual people, families, and the whole community, in all their holistic needs.
  - 1.6.3. Council – a council is a gathering of people who reflect together in order to offer advice – to offer counsel in council. A council studies the local reality and the ‘signs of the times’; it reads the Gospel and the Church’s tradition into the situation; it prays and is open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; it weighs and discerns all these things; it makes recommendations for action; it reviews and learns from the action taken. A council is a place to work on the ‘pastoral cycle’ – experience-analysis-reflection-decision-action-experience...etc; or in the words of the Young Christian Workers – See-Judge-Act.

### 2. Composition

- 2.1. The Parish Synodal Council will consist of 12 members.
- 2.2. There will be 4 ex-officio members:
  - 2.2.1. The Parish Priest
  - 2.2.2. The Parish Deacon

- 2.2.3. The All Hallows School Chaplain
- 2.2.4. The Parish Safeguarding Officer
- 2.3. There will be 8 members from the baptised members of the parish:
  - 2.3.1. Where possible we will strive for these to comprise 4 from St Mary Magdalen's community and 4 from St Teresa's community.
  - 2.3.2. Where possible we will strive to have a balance of women and men.
  - 2.3.3. Initially, these 8 will be comprised of 4 elected members (see s.4 below) and 4 appointed members (appointed by the Parish Priest).
- 2.4. There will be a quorum of 8 required for the Parish Synodal Council to meet.

### **3. Terms of service**

- 3.1. Each elected/appointed member will serve for a term of two years, renewable twice.
- 3.2. After 6 years and a break of a two-year term, someone would be eligible for election/appointment again.
- 3.3. In the absence of new nominees, members who have served for 6 years may be invited to continue for another 2-year term at the discretion of the Parish Priest.
- 3.4. Ex-officio members serve for as long as they hold the relevant office.

### **4. Elections**

- 4.1. Elections will be held at an Open Parish Meeting once a year.
- 4.2. In the first election, 2 members would be elected for 1-year terms and 2 members for 2-year terms. Thereafter, each year 2 members would be elected for 2-year terms.
- 4.3. Prior to the Open Parish Meeting, nominations with a seconder should be submitted in writing to the Parish Priest at least two weeks before the meeting so that the parish can be notified. If there are more nominations than council places, then an election by secret ballot would take place at the Open Parish Meeting overseen by the Parish Priest or his designated person.

### **5. Way of proceeding**

- 5.1. The Parish Synodal Council will meet 3-times per year (termly) for a maximum of 2-hours.
- 5.2. The Parish Priest will preside at the PSC.
- 5.3. The PSC will elect a Chair who will facilitate the council enabling each member to participate.
- 5.4. The PSC will elect a Secretary who will take a record of all decisions made. Agendas and minutes of decisions will be published in the parish by the secretary, but council discussions prior to decisions will remain confidential to the council.
- 5.5. The agenda will be drawn up by the Parish Priest, Chair, and Secretary and will be circulated a week before the meeting to allow for personal reflection and prayer in preparation.
- 5.6. Any member of the parish can propose items for the agenda by submitting them in writing to the PP, Chair, or Secretary at least 3 weeks before the meeting.
- 5.7. The Archbishop, Archdiocesan Synodal Council, the Dean, and/or the Deanery Synodal Council may propose items for reflection and recommendation and these will take priority in setting the agenda.

- 5.8. At each meeting of the Parish Synodal Council, after the topic(s) have been introduced, there will be time given to reading from the Gospel and for silent prayer.
- 5.9. The council will proceed in a synodal discerning manner, enabling each person to share their own personal reflections; followed by a second round of sharing what was heard in the group. A third round of more open discussion will lead to noticing where the Holy Spirit is leading and to identifying recommendations for action.
- 5.10. Decisions taken by the PSC will be in the form of a recommendation to the Parish Priest. Decisions will be sort on the basis of consensus, but if necessary are to be decided by vote. The Parish Priest has a casting vote in the event of a tie.

## **6. Working groups**

- 6.1. The PSC may establish temporary or standing working groups for specific purposes.
- 6.2. Working groups will include at least one member of the PSC.
- 6.3. Other members may be co-opted to working groups as is useful or necessary.
- 6.4. Working groups remain accountable to the Parish Priest and the PSC in all matters.

## **7. Links to other bodies**

- 7.1. The PSC will appoint a member to be the official representative of the parish on the Deanery Synodal Council (DSC) who will serve for the period determined by the DSC.
- 7.2. The DSC representative will consult the PSC on DSC matters.
- 7.3. The PSC will keep in contact with the Parish Finance Group who have responsibility for advising the Parish Priest on the administration of the goods of the parish (cf. Can. 537).
- 7.4. Open Parish Meetings will meet twice a year in the autumn and spring terms, and the PSC members will report to and consult with this Open Parish Meeting.

## **8. Arrangements during a vacancy of Parish Priest**

- 8.1. During a period of vacancy occasioned by the death, retirement, or transfer of a parish priest, the PSC shall cease to function as a Synodal Council.
- 8.2. During a vacancy, the general oversight of the parish is the responsibility of the local Dean unless the Bishop makes other provisions. The Dean may call such meetings of the former PSC, now acting as a Parish Advisory Body (PAB), as may in his judgement be required for the continuing good of the parish.
- 8.3. During the vacancy, the PAB shall not consider any matters which would substantially affect the life of the parish unless they are requested to do so by the Bishop.

## **9. Review of the Constitution of the Parish Synodal Council**

- 9.1. Initially, this document will be reviewed after the first and second years of operation and modified if deemed appropriate.
- 9.2. Thereafter, every four years this document is to be reviewed and modified if deemed appropriate.