

A guide to the annual revision of the Electoral Roll and preparing a new Electoral Roll

The Church electoral roll is the foundation of the whole structure of synodical government in the church. It contains the names and addresses of everyone who can vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Revision of the Electoral Roll

The electoral roll is revised annually. A notice announcing the revision of the roll should be displayed on or near the church door for at least two weeks before the commencement of the revision. The only people who need to fill in an application form are those who have recently moved into the parish, joined the church, or reached the age of 16. Announcements should be made in church each Sunday during the 14 days the notice is displayed. The revision should be completed not less than 15 days or more than 28 days before the Annual Meeting (which must take place before 30th April). During this period, corrections may be made, but no names may be added or removed between the time that the revised roll is completed and the close of the Annual Meeting.

The Electoral Roll Certificate (SG7) should be completed and signed immediately after your Annual Parochial Meeting. One copy should be returned to the Synod Office at The Old Deanery (Secretary, Diocesan Synod) by 1st June. The second copy should be put up on or near the principal door of the Parish Church for a period of 14 days. Copies should also be fixed to the doors of any daughter churches in your parish.

The number certified should include any Daughter or District Churches. Each Parish should have only one electoral roll, even if there is more than one place of worship within the Parish. Ensure that the name of the Parish and Deanery are clearly indicated on the Electoral Roll Form.

When someone leaves your parish and their name is removed from the electoral roll, a notice should be sent to their new parish. Likewise when someone applies for enrolment on the electoral roll of your parish, a notice should be sent to their former parish electoral roll officer.

Preparation of a new Electoral Roll

Every six years each parish is required to prepare a new electoral roll.

A notice should be displayed on or near the main door of every C of E church in the parish. This needs to be done at least two months before the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) and has to stay up for at least 14 days. Once the notice is up, the preparation of the new electoral roll begins. During the 14 days while the notice is up, whoever is conducting services at the church needs to announce to the congregation that the new roll is being prepared.

The PCC needs to ensure that reasonable efforts are made to let everyone on the old electoral roll know that a new one is being prepared. These steps do not have to be taken for anyone who is no longer qualified to be on the roll, i.e. anyone who has become a clerk in Holy Orders or anyone living outside the parish who no longer worships regularly in the parish.

During the period of preparation of the roll, members on the previous roll need to apply to be included - inclusion is not automatic. New people can also apply during this period. A person applies by filling out an application for enrolment form. The preparation of the roll needs to be completed by a fixed date between 15 and 28 days before the APCM.

As with the annual revision, once the roll is complete a copy needs to be put up on or near the main door of the parish church, for at least 14 days before the APCM. During this time corrections may be made to the entries on the roll, for example how a name is spelt or amending the details of an address. No names can be added or removed during this period, this can only happen after the APCM.

The next scheduled preparation of a new Electoral Roll is in 2013 although you should start thinking about the process in autumn 2012. The timetable below will help the preparation run smoothly. New Electoral Rolls will also be prepared in 2019 and 2025.

Notes and Queries

How can I make sure everything happens at the right time and in the right order?

It is useful to work out when the important dates in the process are, starting with the APCM and working backwards. The two tables below will help in both the revision of your electoral roll (Table 1) and, when needed, the creation of a new electoral roll (Table 2).

Who can be on the electoral roll?

To be on the electoral roll a person needs to have been baptised, be at least 16 years old and either:

- Living in the parish and a member of the Church of England or a Church in communion with the Church of England
- Not resident in the parish but is a member of the Church of England (or a Church with which the Church of England is in communion) and has regularly attended worship in the parish during the six months prior to enrolment
- A member in good standing of a Church which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and they are prepared to declare themselves a member of the Church of England, having regularly attended worship during the six months prior to enrolment

All the necessary forms are posted to PCC secretaries in the winter and should be passed on to the electoral roll officer where appropriate. They have been included below and can also be downloaded from the PCCs section of the Diocesan website www.exeter.anglican.org

Please note that the Church Electoral Roll Certificate included below has been dated for 2011. You can update this before printing for subsequent years.

You can also put any questions you may have to Mrs Sara Knaggs at The Old Deanery, Tel: 01392 294931, email: synod@exeter.anglican.org