



## **Catholic Parish of St Edward the Confessor**

### **Parish Council – Terms of Reference**

#### **Aims**

The Mission of the Parish is:

“Keeping Christ at the centre of all that we do, we exist to joyfully spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in Romford, through our prayer, our charitable action, and our celebration of the Sacraments.” The Parish Council exists to continually revise and guide the parish strategy, shaped through annual parish AGMs, to help us to live the Mission. In particular:

- The Parish Council represents all parishioners, with membership drawn from the sub-committees that cover diverse areas of parish life
- The Parish Council is a “critical friend” to the priest, affirming what is going well, and challenging and developing areas of parish life that need greater attention
- The Parish Council coordinates the parish diary, with input from each sub-committee
- The Parish Council has specific financial responsibilities, detailed below

#### **Membership**

This Committee is largely drawn from the different sub-committees, with membership as follows:

- The Parish Priest, *ex officio*
- The Parish Administrator, *ex officio*
- The Chair of the Parish Finance Committee
- A member selected by the Parish Social Committee
- A member selected by the Parish Caritas
- A member selected by the Parish Youth Committee
- A member selected by the Parish Sacramental / Liturgical Planning Group
- A member selected by the Parish Faith Development Group
- One of the Parish Partnership Representatives
- A representative nominated by St Peter’s School

In addition, the Parish Council may invite parishioners with particular expertise to help deliberations on a specific matter.

Members will usually serve of a term of two years, renewable once.

If a member fails to attend two consecutive meetings, their position may be reviewed by the Chair, including asking them to step down from the Committee.

The Parish Priest will chair the Parish Council.

The Parish Council will seek a volunteer to take the minutes.

## Meetings

Meetings will usually be three times a year, in line with school terms.

The pattern will usually be:

**Autumn meeting** – a review of the parish, and date setting for the first part of the following year. Co-ordination of a “Parish AGM”, to help shape parish direction and strategy.

**Spring meeting** – specific focus on parish finances, agreeing the budget and date setting for the second half of the year. Annual review of each sub committee ToR, with a note of any changes in parish life that affect one or more of the sub committees.

**Summer meeting** – a mid year review of the parish, with consideration of any particular major initiatives proposed by any sub committee for the following year.

The Chair will notify members of the meeting date at least a month in advance (or may set dates for the whole year). The dates should ideally follow a bit later than the sub committee meetings.

The meetings will receive information from the sub committees, and summarize information to be shared with the sub committees and the wider parish.

The meeting is quorate if at least 50% of the Parish Council are in attendance, including the Chair. An inquorate meeting may continue, but its decisions are not binding.

It is expected that most decisions will be by consensus. If a vote is needed, each member has a vote. If there is a tied vote, the Parish Priest has a casting vote. The Parish Priest has responsibilities in Canon Law (Church Law), and Civil Law. In the highly unlikely event that the Parish Council took a decision that was not consistent with these responsibilities, the Parish Priest retains the right to veto such a decision.

The minutes will be shared with the Parish Council within a fortnight of the meeting. Once agreed by the members, they will also be available to parishioners, via the parish website.

## Finance

Each sub committee may prepare costed proposals, in line with the limits within their Terms of Reference. Ideally these will be considered by the Finance Committee in terms of affordability, at the Finance Committee meeting prior to the Parish Council. The proposal will then be evaluated by the whole Parish Council. Formally, any proposal between £2,000 - £10,000 must be approved by both the Finance Committee (in terms of the financial considerations) and the Parish Council (in terms of strategic and pastoral considerations).

It is expected that the Parish Priest will be advised of a proposal from any sub-committee at the time when it is brought to the Finance Committee. Any proposals above £10,000 must be approved by Diocesan Trustees, and the process for this requires approval at Finance Committee and Parish Council, as well as – increasingly – conversations within the parish partnership.

## Review of these Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference should be reviewed annually, at the first meeting in the new year (i.e. January / February). If any amendments are suggested, these must be ratified by the Parish Council, and do not take effect until they have been ratified.

First drafted by Fr Dominic Howarth, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024

*To be amended / ratified by Parish Council at the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025*