



## **A POLICY FOR PARISH MEETINGS - GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOL**

### **Agreed Policy**

Church meetings need to be conducted in an atmosphere of prayer, good humour and friendship, yet they are not social occasions.

People come together to consider and make important decisions about the life and mission of the Church. Time restrictions and boundaries ensure that changes and new developments in the life and mission of the Church have sufficient time to be processed and managed. These boundaries can provide an appropriate balance to unnecessary, untimely and unimportant developments.

Church council and committee members, lay and ordained, often lead full and busy lives outside of the Church, and face many family, community and occupational demands. Our time together is precious and to be respected, as is our family life, and the following guidelines are to help us order well our time and meetings together.

- Meetings to begin promptly and end at the agreed time (only to be extended with the agreement of the meeting).
- Meetings to last a maximum of two hours; agenda items may be allocated guide timings by the chair.
- Discussion to be limited to agenda issues only.
- Urgent non-agenda items to be presented at the beginning of a meeting rather than under AOB. If the meeting agrees that this needs to be discussed it should replace other non-urgent item(s).
- Only one person to speak at a time without interruptions or background conversations. All comments and contributions to be put through the chairperson unless an open conversation has expressly been agreed.
- If an open conversation has been granted by the chairperson this is to be given a set time boundary after which the chairperson can close discussion and offer a summary for consideration.
- To enable sufficient time for discussion and consideration a limit to be imposed of only one major item per meeting.
- Major issues are to be discussed as early as possible in the meeting to avoid time pressure and fatigue affecting judgement.
- It is acceptable to challenge statements expressed, but not a person's right to their own and differing opinion. Personal remarks are not acceptable and are to be followed by a public apology. If personal remarks persist the person or people in question will be asked to leave the meeting.
- Discussions to remain focussed on the item under discussion.
- It is acceptable to contribute further to a previously expressed viewpoint to consider implications and developments etc, but it is unnecessary and unhelpful to repeat previously expressed viewpoints.
- Common sense and good manners to be used at all times!
- PCC business must not be conducted via email or other forms of communication unless there are exceptional urgent circumstances, and then only if initiated by the Chair.