

St Gregory's Parish Council Constitution

Parish Mission Statement

St Gregory's is a Salesian-led Catholic community in Bollington, which aims to help people know the love of God, grow as disciples of Jesus and go out and share God's love with others.

Purpose of Parish Council

The Parish Council is a partnership between the priest and the laity, consulting and working together, enabling the parish community to fulfil its mission. The council is a consultative body with an advisory role to assist the priest in developing a parish plan while providing input on issues of pastoral concern.

Parish Council issues are those that impact parishioners' lives, particularly:

- Integration of faith into everyday life and encouragement and support of an individual's faith journey
- Raising awareness of what is happening in the parish, supporting the good work of parish groups and promoting active participation in their activities
- Fostering engagement within the community beyond the parish (e.g., Savio House)
- Developing a partnership with our Catholic schools (St Gregory's and All Hallows) to support our young people in their faith journey as well as providing secular support
- Promoting values of equality and diversity both in its own work and in the life of the parish
- Providing parishioners' feedback on the condition of the parish buildings, grounds, hall and graveyard. Aiding the planning and development of the parish buildings and contents.
- Development of a 1- and 3-year Action Plan

Finances of the parish. This is the responsibility of other groups, including a Finance group, answerable to the Diocese of Shrewsbury.

Parish Council Membership

Baptised and confirmed Catholics over 16 who participate in the life and worship of the parish and who are available for a minimum of half the meetings in one year are eligible to be a Parish Council member.

Membership is 9 members¹, plus the parish priest. Places on the Parish Council are not reserved for any particular parish group, but the ideal Parish Council will include at least a spokesperson for the school governors, catechists and Eucharistic ministers.

¹ Initially 10 members, which will decrease to 9 members after elections in 2018

Roles and responsibilities

Priest

- The priest or a representative will try and attend all Parish Council meetings. He will guide the consultation to ensure that recommendations inform his decisions.

Chairperson

- Scheduling the meetings
- Prepare agenda in discussion with vice chairperson and secretary
- Prepare and lead the prayer at the start of the meeting
- Control the order of business and timings
- End the meeting with a prayer

Vice chairperson

- Consult with chairperson and secretary and run the meetings when the chairperson is unable to attend

Secretary (deputy secretary)

- Take notes during the meeting
- Produce and distribute the minutes of the meeting to Parish Council members (plus other parties depending on the agenda) including collating feedback
- Post minutes on the parish website
- Distribute the agenda for each meeting at least a week in advance
- Have a deputy secretary who can take notes at the meeting if the secretary is unable to attend

Ordinary members

- Members are a representative group of parishioners who are able to study, reflect upon, draw conclusions and make recommendations about the varied aspects of parish life
- Members should show commitment to the work required by the group, providing feedback and changes to the draft minutes to the secretary within 3 days of receipt
- Members should expect to be involved in parish activities or serving on Parish Council sub-committees between meetings
- All members are expected to attend meetings in person and submit apologies to the Chair and Secretary for non-attendance

Selection of Parish Council Members

Parish Council members will stand for a maximum of 3 years before being required to step down or offer themselves for re-election for another 3-year term. After two 3-year terms the Parish Council member cannot stand for election for at least 1 year.²

Ongoing, there will be an election every year for 3 members.

The request for nominees will be advertised at masses, in the newsletter, on the website and using any other suitable communication methods, throughout September. Nomination forms and a voting box will be available in the church foyer and forms will be able to be downloaded from the website. Nominees must indicate their willingness to serve.

The election will take place at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), held on a Sunday before the end of October or at the latest, the first Sunday in November, after 10.30am mass. All parishioners will be encouraged to attend.

Pending elections, vacancies may be filled by co-option.

Meetings

There will be approximately 10 meetings per year, held monthly at a time suitable for the majority of members, apart from July and August. In exceptional circumstances, additional ad hoc meetings may be also held with at least 1 weeks' notice provided.

A quorum for all meetings shall be a minimum of 5 attendees. Each member can vote and conclusions will be based on majority decision.

Sub committees

Sub-committees or working parties may be set up to look into particular matters affecting the parish. Such sub-committees may invite members of the parish with relevant skills for assistance. All sub-committees will be limited in duration and purpose and must report fully to the Parish Council.

Alterations to the Constitution

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the membership and with the agreement of the parish priest. A newly appointed parish priest will not alter the membership of the Parish Council for at least 6 months after taking up the appointment.

² The first members of the Parish Council were elected in October 2016 after a process of nomination and voting by the congregation. In order to ensure that other parishioners are able to serve on the Parish Council, but also ensuring continuity, the following process is proposed:

1. Four ordinary Parish Council members will step down and elections will take place in October 2018 (this is an exception as only 2 years' service due to the nature of the formation of the Council)
2. Three Parish Council members may stand again for re-election for 3 years. Also, other parishioners not currently on the Parish Council are encouraged to stand for election.
3. In October 2019, three more members will stand down (one of whom is the Chairperson; standard 3 years' service as per constitution and may stand again for re-election).
4. In October 2020, three more members will stand down (including the Secretary and the Vice Chair; exception as 4 years' service and may stand again for re election).