**Constitution**

**Constitution of the Diocesan Pastoral Council**

ROLE OF THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

* The Bishop, by virtue of his office, has ultimate responsibility for the diocese;
* In the exercise of his ministry, the Bishop collaborates with different diocesan groupings, one of which is the Diocesan Pastoral Council. In collaborating with the Diocesan Pastoral Council, as with other consultative bodies, the bishop strives to reach decisions by way of consensus. In doing so, the Bishop and the Diocesan Pastoral Council are modelling what is envisioned for the diocese as a whole, namely, the full participation and shared responsibility of all people for the life of the Diocese;
* The Diocesan Pastoral Council seeks to discern the pastoral needs of the people of the diocese and search for ways to respond adequately to those needs. At all times, the Diocesan Pastoral Council will be faithful to the mission of the Diocese;
* The Diocesan Pastoral Council establishes priorities, plans pastoral initiatives and devises appropriate strategies for implementation of the diocesan plans and strategies;
* The members are representative of the diocese at large and not of any specific group, cause or agenda;
* At all times the role of the Diocesan Pastoral Council will be in accordance with the teachings of Sacred Scripture, the Canon Law of the Church, as well as the norms of the Irish Episcopal Conference;
* The role of the Diocesan Pastoral Council will be reviewed in the context of diocesan plans and strategies.

MEMBERSHIP

* In the interests of efficiency, membership will not exceed twenty - five people including:
  + The Bishop;
  + A lay person from each of the 12 pastoral areas ;
  + Four priests selected by the Priests’ Council, one of whom will be a curate;
  + Three other people may be appointed by the Bishop for their particular gifts/experience, with the advice of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, inclusive of age and gender balance.
  + The following ex-officio members:
    - Pastoral Renewal Team;
    - Director of Communications;
    - Diocesan Secretary;
* The term of office shall be three years. Non –ex officio members may be reappointed, but may serve only two consecutive terms at any one time. Members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council automatically lose their office, when the Bishop is transferred or retires or when the see is impeded or vacant;
* The term of the first Diocesan Pastoral Council will be for three years. Thereafter, one third of the non-ex officio members will resign and may be nominated for re-appointment for one further term of three years by their nominating body. In year 4 of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, a further one third of the non-ex officio members will resign, and in year 5 of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the final one third of the first Diocesan Pastoral Council will resign. Thereafter, one third of the non ex-officio members will resign each year. Those who are to retire shall be those who are longest in office, since their last appointment;
* To maintain stability and efficiency, only one third of the Diocesan Pastoral Council members are to be open for appointment or re-appointment at any one time;
* Any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without indication of non-attendance will have their appointment to the Diocesan Pastoral Council rescinded, and the nominating body of that member will be asked to nominate a replacement.

OFFICERS

* The Chairperson shall be appointed by the Bishop;
* A recording Secretary will be appointed.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER MINISTRY GROUPS

* The Pastoral Council will have structured links with all Diocesan bodies; however, it is not within its remit to direct their activities.

SUB-COMMITTEES

* The Diocesan Pastoral Council may set up sub-committees to advise it on matters of special pastoral concern;
* Other people, who are not members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, may be co-opted onto these sub-committees because of their particular gifts and skills.

MEETINGS

* The Diocesan Pastoral Council shall meet only when the Bishop or his delegate is present;
* Meetings shall take place not less than 4 times a year – dates pre-arranged;
* A quorum shall consist of thirteen members;
* Members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council are invited to submit relevant topics for the agenda to the Secretary ten days before each meeting;
* Prior to each meeting, the Bishop and Chairperson together with the Secretary shall draw up the agenda. The agenda will be circulated to all members, a week before each meeting.