



DIOCESAN COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

Approved by: Diocesan Council

13 July 2017

1 PREAMBLE

Should anything in this Policy conflict with section 12A(2) of the Diocesan Council Statute 1888 as follows, the express provision of the Statute should be given priority in interpretation:

“12A (2) Unless the Chair in his absolute discretion considers a matter to be of a confidential nature the Council shall make copies of its business papers and minutes of meetings available to any member of Synod upon being requested by any such member to do so, subject to the: (a) Council removing from the business paper or minutes (as the case may be) details of any matter which the Chair considers to be of a confidential nature; and (b) Member of Synod paying the reasonable costs of photocopying the business paper or minutes.”

2 INTRODUCTION

Communications within the Diocese may occur for a wide variety of purposes, including:

- informing or involving parishes, agencies, schools, chaplaincies and other Church entities,
- responding to the media or other requests for information, compliance or reporting, and
- to promote or represent the Diocese.

It is important to consider how the Diocesan Council communicates internally and externally. As a general rule, it is important that Diocesan Council communicates:

- a clear and united message, usually through the Chairman,
- only on issues within the scope or authority of the Diocesan Council,
- with consideration of Diocesan Council’s responsibility to the Diocese and its accountabilities, including to the Province or the national Church,
- with appropriate protocols in place to ensure key diocesan individuals and entities are informed about the Diocesan Council’s activities, and
- with consideration to confidentiality obligations.

3 COMMUNICATION OF DIOCESAN COUNCIL BUSINESS

Agendas for meetings of Diocesan Council, and reports to Diocesan Council, are not to be published before a meeting of Diocesan Council other than to members of Diocesan Council without the consent of the Chairman and the Diocesan Registrar and the author of the relevant report.



The terms or substance of resolutions of Diocesan Council are to be published¹ unless, in the opinion of the Chairman and Diocesan Registrar, it is inappropriate to do so to preserve confidentiality or proper conduct of the business of Diocesan Council or the proper conduct of the business of the persons affected by those resolutions.

Reports received by Diocesan Council are to be published with the consent of Diocesan Council.

Where necessary to facilitate a proper understanding of a resolution of Diocesan Council, the Diocesan Registrar is authorised to cause such reports to be edited with the consent of the authors for reasons of confidentiality or the proper conduct of the business of Diocesan Council or any other person or body.

Budgets approved by Diocesan Council are to be published on the Diocesan website. Variations to budgets and expenditure authorised to be made outside of budgets are to be published once approved by Diocesan Council.²

4 DIOCESAN COUNCIL AND REGISTRAR

Generally, Diocesan Council members should not directly approach church workers for information, but rather make the request through the Registrar. Church workers should likewise approach Diocesan Council through the Registrar.

The Registrar should usually lead communication of Diocesan Council matters with church workers and the Registrar or Chair should usually lead communication with diocesan individuals and entities.

The Chair should usually lead communication with the media.

5 DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

If Diocesan Council Members receive requests or queries from the media, the first step is to discuss the request with the Chair, and Registrar where appropriate. Members who have been given permission to make public comment should confine their comments to information necessary to provide a concise, factual response.

6 MAKING PUBLIC COMMENTS AND REPRESENTING THE ORGANISATION

Public comment includes comment made in circumstances where it is reasonable to expect that the comment may reach the wider community. This may include comments made on the internet, in speeches, on the radio, or in the press.

Generally, Diocesan Council members will not be required to make public comments concerning Diocesan Council or the Diocese; this role is likely to be fulfilled by the Chair. Occasionally, however, Diocesan Council members may be requested to represent Diocesan Council or the Diocese in a public setting.

¹ As per Diocesan Council resolution of 8 May 2014: “Place a synopsis of each meeting on the website and in the Diocesan Bulletin, drafted by the Diocesan Registrar and approved by the Archbishop”.

² Audited financial statements are provided to all Synod members prior to Synod.



- Members should ensure their behaviour is consistent with the objectives of the Diocesan Council.
- It is not appropriate for Diocesan Council members to publicly share personal views, speculate on future directions, criticise any political party or continue debate on an issue after a decision has been made by the Diocesan Council.
- Members should refrain from providing information or advice without prior authorisation from the Chairman (or Registrar, where relevant).
- Churchworkers are not permitted to engage with the Media unless specific permission has been given by the Chair, Archbishop, or Administrator or Diocesan Secretary.

7 WORKING WITH DIOCESAN INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES

Information flows between Diocesan Council and diocesan individuals/entities should be two-way and ideally should include Diocesan Council receiving feedback from those diocesan individuals/entities regarding its engagement and communication strategies.

8 MEMBERS OF DIOCESAN COUNCIL

The Chair is the appropriate gate keeper for information to and from the Diocesan Council. This helps ensure a consistent message and encourages Diocesan Council to operate as a united whole rather than as individuals. As with relationships between the Diocesan Council and external parties, communication within the Diocesan Council is also crucial for healthy relationships between members.

9 RAISING CONCERNS

Diocesan Council members have several avenues for raising concerns regarding decisions or actions that may be contrary to the Diocesan Council's public duty or potential misconduct by Diocesan Council members or Diocesan management.

Depending on the nature of the issue, concerns should usually first be expressed to the Chair, and for matters relating to management also with the Diocesan Secretary.