**Holy Innocents' RC Church**

**Constitution of the Parish Co-responsibility Group  
as adopted in September 2013**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 **Name**

This is the constitution of the Parish Co-responsibility Group of Holy Innocents' RC Church, Orpington, Kent (the **"Parish"**), which is referred to in this constitution as the **"PCRG"**.

1.2 **Role**

The role of the PCRG will be:

(a) to develop, and periodically update, a pastoral plan for the Parish (the **"Parish Pastoral Plan"**);

(b) to oversee the implementation of the Parish Pastoral Plan;

(c) to act as a leadership group for the Parish; and

(d) to be an example of co-responsibility in action and to foster co-responsibility within the Parish.

1.3 **Relationship with others in the Parish**

(a) In addition to the PCRG, the Parish will have a Finance Committee and many other groups and activities.

(b) The PCRG will seek to establish good working relationships with each of the Parish's groups and other activities and with parishioners generally.

(c) Under the canon law of the Catholic Church, legal responsibility for the Parish vests in the Parish Priest. Nothing in this constitution is intended to diminish or undermine that legal responsibility; but the establishment of the PCRG witnesses to the fact that the Parish Priest has decided to exercise his responsibility and authority within a framework of baptismal co-responsibility in full accordance with the Catholic Church's teaching on the concept and importance of baptismal co-responsibility.

2. **COMPOSITION AND SELECTION**

2.1 **Composition**

The PCRG shall be made up of the following people:

(a) up to eight ordinary members appointed from time to time in accordance with paragraph 2.2;

(b) any Permanent Deacon appointed from time to time in accordance with paragraph 2.3;

(c) any members co-opted from time to time in accordance with paragraph 2.4; and

(d) the Parish Priest from time to time.

2.2 **Ordinary members**

(a) Each ordinary member shall be a member of the Parish who is either in the consecrated life or a baptised layperson.

(b) The ordinary members at the date of adoption of this constitution have been chosen by the Parish Priest from those nominated (by themselves or by one or more other members of the Parish) and have taken office. Shortly before the expiry of the term of an ordinary member, nominations for the person to serve in his or her place for the next term will be sought and considered by the Parish Priest in consultation with the PCRG. The Parish Priest's choice will be submitted to the relevant annual general meeting for approval; see paragraph 5.3(c) (*Conduct and content of annual general meeting*).

(c) Although it is expected that in choosing ordinary members of the PCRG the Parish Priest and the PCRG will take into consideration the need for the membership of the PCRG to change over time, an ordinary member may serve two or more successive terms (and so may be re-appointed under the above procedure).

(d) Each ordinary member shall be appointed for a term of approximately three years, ending at the end of the annual general meeting in the final year of that term; except that the terms of the initial ordinary members of the PCRG have been set (at three, four or five years) so that from the end of the third year the terms of two or more ordinary members will expire at the end of the annual general meeting each year.

2.3 **Permanent Deacon**

(a) At any time when there are one or more Permanent Deacons serving in the Parish, the Parish Priest will (in consultation with him, them or, God willing, her) select one of them to serve on the PCRG.

(b) The term of a Permanent Deacon on the PCRG (and the replacement of one Permanent Deacon for another on the PCRG) will be a matter for the Parish Priest, bearing in mind the other responsibilities of the Permanent Deacon or Deacons in the Parish; but it is the intention that, if possible, a Permanent Deacon appointed to the PCRG should serve for at least two years.

2.4 **Co-opted members**

(a) The PCRG, with the approval of the Parish Priest, may co-opt up to ***[three]*** members of the Parish in total at any time as members of the PCRG. Any appointment under this paragraph 2.4(a) must be for a specified term of no more than three years and the person involved shall not be eligible to be co-opted again onto the PCRG at the end of that specified period without the approval of the Parish Priest and the annual general meeting.

(b) In addition, if an ordinary member of the PCRG leaves the PCRG for any reason before the expiry of the term for which she or he was appointed, then the PCRG may appoint a member of the Parish to fill the vacancy. Any appointment under this paragraph 2.4(b) shall take immediate effect but shall only be for the period up to the next annual general meeting. If the outgoing PCRG member's term of office would not have expired at that annual general meeting, then a replacement (who may be the person appointed by the PCRG to fill the vacancy in the meantime) may be appointed by the procedure set out in paragraph 2.2(b) for a term of up to three (or in the case of the annual general meeting in 2014, up to four) years as determined by the PCRG.

2.5 **Resignation and removal**

(a) An ordinary or co-opted member of the PCRG may resign from the PCRG with immediate effect at any time.

(b) An ordinary or co-opted member of the PCRG may be removed from the PCRG with immediate effect at any time by a decision of the Parish Priest supported by a majority of the other PCRG members (excluding the Parish Priest and the member whose removal is at issue). The PCRG will, if reasonably practicable, afford the member whose removal is at issue the prior opportunity to address it in relation to his or her proposed removal.

3. **CHAIR AND SECRETARY**

3.1 **Chair**

(a) The PCRG will appoint one of its ordinary or co-opted members (the **"Chair"**) to be the chair of the PCRG for a term (which may not exceed the then current term of her or his membership of the PCRG) determined by the PCRG.

(b) The Chair shall chair each meeting of the PCRG and each annual general meeting at which he or she is present. At a meeting at which she or he is not present, the PCRG shall appoint another ordinary or co-opted member to chair the meeting.

3.2 **Secretary**

(a) The Parish Priest will, in consultation with the PCRG, appoint a secretary to the PCRG (the "Secretary") from time to time.

(b) The Secretary will attend and take minutes at each meeting of the PCRG and have such further duties as the PCRG may decide from time to time.

4. **MEETINGS OF THE PCRG**

4.1 **Frequency of meetings**

The PCRG will meet as often as it determines to be appropriate, but no less frequently than six times per year.

4.2 **Meeting procedure**

(a) The quorum for a meeting of the PCRG shall be ***[five]*** members of the PCRG (who may, but need not, include the Parish Priest and/or any Permanent Deacon who is a member) present in person or (if the person chairing the meeting so decides) by telephone or any other real-time communication method.

(b) Each meeting of the PCRG shall be chaired by the Chair; except that if he or she is not present, the meeting shall appoint another ordinary or co-opted member of the PCRG to chair the meeting.

(c) Although it is the intention that the PCRG should operate in a collaborative manner with a view to reaching a consensus, so that formal votes at meetings of the PCRG will be a rarity, they may still occur from time to time. Votes shall only be taken at a meeting of the PCRG if the person chairing the meeting so decides and then in the manner determined by him or her. Each member of the PCRG shall have one vote. The Secretary shall not have a vote; and the person chairing the meeting shall not have a casting vote in the event of a tie.

4.3 **Minutes**

(a) Minutes of each meeting of the PCRG shall be taken by the Secretary and approved and signed by the person chairing the meeting (with each member of the PCRG being given the opportunity to review and comment upon a draft where this is practicable).

(b) The minutes of each meeting, once so approved and signed, will be published to parishioners by such means as the PCRG may determine from time to time; except that any matters of a personal or confidential nature may be redacted from the published copy if the PCRG or the Parish Priest so determines.

4.4 **Sub-committees**

(a) The PCRG may establish one or more sub-committees or working groups to assist in its work. A sub-committee of the PCRG shall be comprised of members of the PCRG. A working group may comprise members of the PCRG or other members of the Parish and (if the PCRG so decides for a reason specific to the proposed work of a working group) a person who is not a member of the Parish.

(b) The terms of reference and duration of any sub-committee or working group shall be determined by the PCRG. The decision to establish any sub-committee or working group shall be recorded in the minutes of the relevant PCRG meeting.

(c) The PCRG shall determine the manner in which any sub-committee or working group reports back to the PCRG; and may attach a written report from a sub-committee or working group to its published minutes.

5. **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

5.1 **Timing of annual general meeting**

An annual general meeting of the Parish shall be held once a year, at a date to be determined by the PCRG in or about [***June? September?***] each year. ***[Note -- many groups would have constitutions providing for extraordinary general meetings to be requisitioned by members as well as AGMs, but I think that would be inappropriate in relation to a Parish?]***

5.2 **Notice of annual general meeting**

Not less than ***[14 days' notice]*** of the annual general meeting shall be given in the Parish newsletter and on the Parish website. This notice shall include a summary of the proposed business for the annual general meeting, including the identity of proposed members of the PCRG in respect of whom an approval vote will be held at the meeting as referred to in paragraph 2.2(b) (*Ordinary members*) or paragraph 2.4(a) (*Co-opted members*). However, the proceedings of an annual general meeting shall not be invalidated by any failure to give notice in this way.

5.3 **Conduct and content of annual general meeting**

(a) The quorum for the annual general meeting shall be ***[25]*** members of the Parish present in person.

(b) Each annual general meeting shall be chaired by the Chair or, if she or he is not present, by another member ordinary or co-opted member of the PCRG nominated by the PCRG.

(c) The business of the annual general meeting shall be:

(i) the presentation and discussion of a report by the PCRG on its activity and the Parish generally during the preceding year;

(ii) approval votes in relation to proposed members of the PCRG as referred to in paragraph 2.2(b) (*Ordinary members*) or paragraph 2.4(a) (*Co-opted members*); and

(iii) such other business as the PCRG or the person chairing the meeting may determine.

(d) Votes at an annual general meeting shall be taken on a show of hands, unless the person chairing the meeting orders a poll (which he or she must do if six or more members of the Parish so request). Each member of the Parish present shall have a single vote. The person chairing the meeting shall not have a second, casting vote in the event of a tie.

6. **PARTICULAR RULES IN RELATION TO MEMBERS**

6.1 **Not trustees**

For the avoidance of doubt, it is not intended that the members of the PCRG should by reason of that membership be, or be treated as, trustees of the Parish. ***[Note: we need to consider whether as a matter of law this conclusion can be sustained and, if not, the consequences.]***

6.2 **No remuneration**

Any decision that the Parish should employ or pay any other remuneration to a member of the PCRG (or to any business connected with a member of the PCRG) must take into account all relevant circumstances, including without limitation the ability and experience of the member or business concerned and the proposed level of remuneration, and be approved by the PCRG in the absence of that member and also approved by the Finance Committee.

***[Note: we need to consider reimbursement of expenses; is there any Parish policy regarding that, for example prior approval for expenditure over a certain amount? There shouldn't be significant expenses, but we can't rule out travel, printing and so forth and we should have a rule relating to approvals which is clearly expressed here]***

7. **AMENDMENTS**

An amendment to this constitution may only be made by [the Parish Priest in consultation with the PCRG] OR [the PCRG by a resolution supported by at least two-thirds of its members] OR [the PCRG with the approval of an affirmative resolution of the annual general meeting]. ***[Note: this is a tricky one which we will need to discuss.]***

[End]