

Constitution and By-laws of the Parish Finance Committee (PFC)

Catholic Parish of Wairarapa

Summary/Synopsis

This document outlines the Constitution and By-laws for the Parish Finance Committee (PFC) of the Catholic Parish of Wairarapa, established in accordance with Canon Law and the norms of the Archdiocese of Wellington.

The PFC is a consultative body designed to assist the Parish Priest or Lay Pastoral Leader in administering the parish's "temporal goods" (financial and physical assets). Its work is rooted in the principles of stewardship, solidarity, and the common good. While the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) defines the parish's mission and vision, the PFC ensures the parish has the necessary resources and means to achieve those goals.

The Parish Finance Committee is composed of the Parish Priest, who serves as an ex officio member, along with two to six appointed members. Members are selected based on their commitment to the Church and their professional expertise in fields such as accounting, law, business, or construction. Each member serves a three-year term and may serve for a maximum of three consecutive terms. Meetings of the committee are typically held monthly, and specific quorums, determined by the total number of members, are required to make decisions.

The PFC oversees the financial health and physical infrastructure of the parish by focusing on several key areas. Financial management responsibilities include preparing annual budgets, providing financial advice, and ensuring transparency by reporting to parishioners at least once each year.

In terms of property and assets, the committee safeguards parish property, plans for long-term maintenance, and establishes capital reserves for the replacement of major assets such as church halls.

The committee is also charged with managing "Planned Giving" programs, encouraging bequests, and organizing fundraising activities for special projects.

To ensure compliance, the committee is responsible for the timely filing of financial statements to the Archdiocese by July 31 and to Charities Services by September 30, as well as maintaining GST and tax compliance.

The PFC must work in tandem with the Parish Pastoral Council to ensure financial decisions support pastoral goals. Members are strictly required to declare conflicts of interest and must obtain Archdiocesan approval for significant matters, such as the sale of land or accepting conditional bequests.

Constitution and By-laws of the Parish Finance Committee (PFC)

Catholic Parish of Wairarapa

Based on the financial norms and policies of the Archdiocese of Wellington, here is the constitution and by-laws for the Finance Committee of the Catholic Parish of Wairarapa.

Article I: Purpose and Canonical Status

1. **Mandate:** In accordance with Canon 537 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the norms of the Archdiocese of Wellington, there shall be a Finance Committee in the Catholic Parish of Wairarapa.
2. **Nature:** The PFC is a consultative body established to assist the Parish Priest (or Lay Pastoral Leader) in the administration of the temporal goods of the parish.
3. **Guiding Principles:** The committee's work shall reflect the principles of stewardship, subsidiarity, solidarity, and the common good.

Article II: Membership and Appointments

1. **Ex Officio Member:** The Parish Priest is an *ex officio* member of the PFC.
2. **Composition:** The committee shall consist of the Parish Priest and at least two, but no more than six, other members.
3. **Qualifications:** Members must demonstrate a commitment to Christ and the Church. Collectively, they should possess appropriate financial skills and experience, reflecting the gender and ethnic diversity of the parish and involving young people.
4. **Appointment Process:** Appointments are made by the Parish Priest (or Lay Pastoral Leader), who should consult with existing PFC members and the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) before making new appointments.
5. **Terms of Office:**
 - Members are appointed for a three-year term.
 - Members may serve no more than three consecutive terms.
 - Appointments should be staggered to ensure continuity.

Article III: Roles and Responsibilities

The PFC has a particular responsibility to ensure the parish is adequately resourced for its facilities and staffing. Key duties include:

1. **Financial Oversight:** Preparing budgets, providing financial advice, and accounting for all parish income and expenditure.
2. **Stewardship of Assets:** Safeguarding parish assets and ensuring parish property is well maintained.
3. **Pastoral Planning:** Working closely with the Parish Priest and PPC to advise on the financial implications of long-term and annual pastoral plans.
4. **Income Management:**
 - Ensuring a Planned Giving Programme is in operation and renewed every two to three years.
 - Encouraging bequests and managing income-producing assets (e.g., hall hire).
 - Organizing fundraising for special projects.
5. **Accountability:** Disclosing financial information to parishioners at least once a year in an understandable format.

Article IV: Meetings and Governance

1. **Frequency:** The committee shall normally meet at least once a month, either in person or via video call.
2. **Attendance:** The Parish Priest or Lay Pastoral Leader must be present unless an apology is tendered.
3. **Quorum and Participation:**
 - If the committee has 2–3 members (excluding the priest), all must participate in decisions.
 - If it has 5–6 members, at least four must participate.
4. **Decision Making:** The PFC should strive for harmony and rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Decisions made by email must be minuted at the subsequent meeting.
5. **Conflict of Interest:** Members must declare any personal interest in matters under consideration and exclude themselves from related decision-making.
6. **Minutes:** Formal minutes must be kept of all meetings, including recording votes for and against where formal consent is required.

Article V: Financial Operations and Compliance

1. **Bank Accounts:** At least two people must be authorized to operate any parish bank account, one of whom must be the Parish Priest, Moderator, or Lay Pastoral Leader.
2. **Reporting:**
 - A compliant set of financial statements must be sent to the Archdiocese by July 31 each year.
 - Annual returns must be filed with Charities Services by September 30.
3. **Levies and Taxes:** The committee ensures timely payment of Archdiocesan levies (calculated monthly) and compliance with GST and other tax requirements.
4. **Surplus Funds:** Surplus funds must be invested with the Catholic Development Fund (CDF).

Article VI: Collaboration with the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)

1. **Shared Vision:** Financial and pastoral planning must proceed in tandem.
2. **Liaison:** To facilitate collaboration, some shared membership may occur; for instance, the Chair of the PFC may serve on the PPC.
3. **Communication:** The PPC should present the PFC with an annual plan so both groups can plan their complementary roles.

Article VII: Property Management and Maintenance

1. **Maintenance Responsibility:** The PFC must ensure that all parish property is well-maintained to safeguard its value and functionality for pastoral work.
2. **Regular Reviews:** The committee, in collaboration with the Parish Priest, shall review the schedule of parish properties annually to ensure the insurance schedule remains accurate.
3. **Capital Reserves:** The PFC is responsible for establishing reserves to cover the eventual replacement of major capital assets, such as the church hall or computer systems, ensuring funds are available when needed.
4. **Operational Costs:** The PFC oversees the payment of regular property expenses, including insurance levies and maintenance costs.

Article VIII: Building Projects and Capital Expenditure

1. **Approval of Projects:** Any major building project must be part of the parish's long-term or annual pastoral plans, with the PFC advising on the financial feasibility and implications.

2. **Archdiocesan Consultation:** For significant property matters, such as the sale of land or buildings, the PFC must consult with the Archdiocesan General Manager or Finance Director.
3. **Financial Support:** The PFC works with the Parish Priest and the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) to identify and secure the necessary funding for priority facilities and capital works.

Article IX: Fundraising and Special Projects

1. **Campaign Management:** The PFC is tasked with organizing fundraising campaigns for specific parish projects as identified in the pastoral plans.
2. **Archdiocesan Approval:** Fundraising for specific purposes must be approved by the Archbishop if the income is to be excluded from standard Archdiocesan levy calculations.
3. **Stewardship Focus:** All fundraising efforts should be grounded in the widest understanding of Christian stewardship and its importance in developing parish life.
4. **Prohibited Use:** Offerings given by parishioners for a specific purpose (e.g., a specific building fund) can only be applied to that purpose.

Article X: Grants, Bequests, and Special Income

1. **Grant and Bequest Management:** The PFC manages income-producing assets (such as hall hire) and encourages the making of bequests to the Parish or the wider Church.
2. **Conditional Bequests:** Any bequest with attached conditions requires the approval of the Archbishop before it can be formally accepted by the parish.
3. **Reporting:** The Archbishop must be advised of all bequests left to the parish.
4. **Funds Administration:** Substantial sums left for a specific purpose must be invested in separate accounts to ensure the donor's specific requirements are met.
5. **Agency Role:** When the parish receives funds for specific Archdiocesan appeals (e.g., Caritas or Missions), it acts as an agent, receipting the funds and transferring them to the appropriate body as soon as practical.

Article XI: Compliance and Taxation

1. **GST Compliance:** The parish must maintain its GST registration and ensure all returns are filed in a timely manner.
2. **Donee Status:** The PFC ensures that all donation receipts include the mandatory wording ("Catholic Parish of Wairarapa, a parish of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington") and the correct Charities Registration Number to allow parishioners to claim tax rebates.
3. **Accountability:** A compliant Tier 3 set of Financial Statements must be submitted to the Archdiocese by 31 July each year and filed with Charities Services by 30 September.

Appendix 1

Finance Committee (or Commission)

In most Catholic parishes, the Finance Commission (often formally called the Parish Finance Committee) is a distinct body with a specialized role. While the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) focuses on the parish's "mission and vision," the Finance Commission ensures the parish has the "means and resources" to achieve that mission.

Based on the Archdiocesan Finance Norms, here is an elaboration on its purpose, functions, and unique relationship with the Pastoral Council.

1. Purpose and Nature

The primary role of the Finance Commission is to provide the Pastor with expert advice on the stewardship of parish material resources.

- **Consultative Body:** Like the Pastoral Council, it is consultative to the Pastor.
- **Canonically Mandated:** Universal Church law (Canon Law) typically requires every parish to have a Finance Council, separate from the Pastoral Council, to assist with financial matters.
- **Stewardship Focus:** It aims to manage the "treasure" of the community to ensure long-term sustainability.

2. Key Functions

The commission's work is generally categorized into budgeting, reporting, and long-range planning:

- **Budgeting:** It prepares and reviews the annual parish budget, ensuring funds are allocated according to the pastoral priorities set by the PPC.
- **Financial Reporting:** It monitors income and expenses throughout the year and provides regular, transparent financial reports to the Pastor and the parish community.
- **Property & Maintenance:** It often oversees the physical state of parish buildings, grounds, and equipment, planning for necessary repairs or capital improvements. They are to create a roadmap for property maintenance to ensure the properties are well updated regularly.
- **Fundraising & Development:** It may implement professional development techniques to encourage parishioners to be invested in the parish's mission through automatic payments, bequests, fundraising, and donations.

3. Relationship with the Parish Pastoral Council

There is a vital link between the two councils to ensure the parish doesn't become "siloeed".

- **Vision vs. Resources:** The Pastoral Council decides **what** the parish should be doing (e.g., "We need a new youth program"), and the Finance Commission determines **how** to fund it.
- **Communication:** It is recommended that the two bodies maintain regular communication—sometimes through a shared member or by exchanging meeting minutes—to ensure financial decisions support pastoral goals.
- **Collaboration:** The Finance Commission should not make pastoral policy, and the Pastoral Council should not manage daily financial accounts.

4. Membership Profile

Members are typically chosen for their expertise in specific professional fields, such as:

- Accounting or financial management.
- Civil law or business administration.
- Construction, engineering, or property maintenance.
- General leadership and a deep commitment to the parish's mission.