



PARISH COUNCIL HANDBOOK 2023

This document is a resource for Parish Councillors¹.

Being a Parish Councillor entails:

- Being an active part of our Church's community life, especially through regular attendance at Sunday worship.
- Accepting responsibility for the general affairs of the Parish, including the upkeep of its buildings and other assets
- Managing the financial affairs of the Parish
- Managing risk to the Parish in all its forms
- Managing WHS in the Church precinct
- Regular attendance at monthly Parish Council meetings
- Serving, as required, on Council committees

¹ First introduced January 2019 as *Information for Prospective Parish Councillors*.

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1. THE ROLE, OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERSHIP OF PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council is the governance body for the Parish, which means it sets the overall strategic direction of the Parish, manages risk and assesses its performance. It also has a management function by reason of its prescribed responsibilities (see below).

Its role is described fully in the *Governance of the Diocese Ordinance 2000 (as amended)*, which you are encouraged to consult. The latest version of the Ordinance will be found under *Ordinances* on the Diocesan web site: <https://anglicancg.org.au/>

For the legislative basis upon which our church rests see a number of NSW and ACT acts listed on the Diocesan web site including:

Anglican Church of Australia (Bodies Corporate) Act 1938 No 15

Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 2018 (ACT)

Anglican Church of Australia Trust Property Act 1928

These notes are a simple summary of the important elements from the Ordinance, written from the perspective of St John's, but they should not be relied upon in any legal sense. The Ordinance itself is the legal basis for the formation and operation of Parish Council.

The Rector and Parish Council have, in partnership, the responsibility and authority under the Bishop for the mission and ministry of St John's.

Parish Councillors are volunteers and are required to observe the Volunteers Policy of the Parish. They are also required by the Diocese to complete a Statutory Declaration on appointment that they are a fit and proper person to hold that office.

Membership

To be a member of Parish Council a person must be a member of our Church; that requires them to be baptised and a regular worshipper.

Members of Parish Council include:

- a. The Rector
- b. The stipendiary assistant clergy of the parish
- c. The Churchwardens
- d. 3, 6, 9 or 12 other persons (as resolved at the electoral meeting of the parish) of whom one-third shall be persons nominated by the Rector or person in charge and two-thirds shall be elected by the members of the parish

Responsibilities

Parish Council provides Parish leadership by setting, in conjunction with the Rector, objectives and strategies for the work of the Church and by the efficient and effective management of its resources.

It is responsible specifically to the Bishop and to the members of the Parish for:

- a. Managing the financial affairs of the Parish
- b. Maintaining the buildings, grounds and other property held on behalf of the ministry unit in good order and repair
- c. Ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, that all church workers and persons accessing the ministry provided by the Church comply with the provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* of the Commonwealth

- d. Taking action, as far as is reasonably practicable, to address and reduce actual and reasonably likely risk of physical or psychological harm to members of the ministry unit or other persons accessing any ministry provided by the ministry unit

Parish Council is also responsible to the Bishop for meeting the obligations of the Parish in accordance with a covenant entered into by the Rector with the Bishop within six months of the beginning of their appointment with the Parish.

Meetings

Parish Council meets at 7:00pm on the third Wednesday evening each month, except January, usually in the Robertson Room.

All proceedings of Parish Council are confidential to those present.

THE CHURCHWARDENS

There are three Churchwardens, two chosen at the Electoral Meeting held as part of the Annual General Meeting of the Parish (the peoples' wardens) and one appointed by the Rector (the Rector's warden).

Responsibilities

The Churchwardens are responsible to the Bishop and the Parish Council for:

- a. Ensuring the provision of all things necessary for the conduct of public worship at the Church
- b. The maintenance in good order and repair of the property of or used by the Church
- c. The safekeeping of parish registers and other parish records
- d. The maintenance in good order and repair of the Rectory, other houses provided for the staff of the parish and other parish property

The Churchwardens of the Parish have a duty to provide a written report to the Bishop, signed by a majority of them, on any serious irregularities in the performance of public worship or any wilful neglect of duty or any serious misconduct on the part of the Rector.

The Churchwardens have the functions and duties conferred or imposed by the laws of the Church, including canons of General Synod and the ordinances of this Diocese.

PRESIDING MEMBER

The Presiding Member is elected by and from the members of Parish Council at the meeting next after the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Parish, unless the AGM decides in advance that the Presiding Member should be chosen at that meeting. The former has been the long-standing practice at St John's.

PARISH TREASURER

Appointment

The Parish Treasurer is appointed by Parish Council and must be a member of the Parish.

If the person appointed as treasurer is not a member of the Council, they become, upon being so appointed, a member of the Council for all purposes for the remainder of the current term of the Council.

Responsibilities

The Treasurer is responsible to the Council for:

- a. Ensuring the proper banking of all moneys of the Council and the proper payment of all amounts payable by the Council
- b. Maintaining proper financial records of the Parish
- c. Reporting to each meeting of the Council on the financial affairs of the Parish, including projected outcomes in accordance with the annual budget of the Council
- d. Preparing forward estimates of income and expenditure in accordance with strategies and plans adopted by the Council
- e. Ensuring that the accounts of the Parish are audited by a qualified auditor
- f. Preparing the annual financial report to the annual general meeting of parishioners

THE PARISH SECRETARY***Appointment***

Parish Council may appoint a person as secretary of the Council with such duties as the Council may decide. The secretary must be a member of the Parish.

If the person appointed as secretary is not a member of the Council, they become, upon being so appointed, a member of the Council for all purposes for the remainder of the current term of the Council.

Responsibilities

Parish Council has determined that the responsibilities of the Parish Secretary are:

- a. Work with the Presiding Member in setting the Agenda
- b. Collate and distribute meeting papers
- c. Take minutes at meetings including the Annual General Meeting, Parish Council and General Meetings
- d. Produce draft minutes expeditiously after a meeting to allow checking by the Presiding Member and other members of the Executive
- e. Prepare outgoing correspondence
- f. Contact, as appropriate, those in the Parish and beyond that need to be advised of Parish Council decisions and discussions, unless Parish Council otherwise determines that the Rector or another officer undertake that task in particular circumstances
- g. Within two weeks of a Parish Council meeting, prepare a summary of the business of the meeting for inclusion in the Newsletter
- h. Prepare a dossier of all papers from each Parish Council meeting for filing in the Parish office. An electronic copy is also needed for placement on the Parish's server

THE PARISH EXECUTIVE

Membership

The executive committee of Parish Council consists, as appropriate, of:

- a. The Presiding Member
- b. The Rector
- c. The Assistant Priest(s)
- d. The Churchwardens
- e. The Treasurer
- f. The Secretary

Responsibilities

Under the Ordinance the Executive Committee, subject to any directions of Parish Council, has all the powers, and may perform all the functions, of the Council between meetings of the Council, with such matters to be reported to Parish Council at its next meeting.

It ensures all supporting documents are available, and undertakes whatever other preparation is necessary for forthcoming Parish Council meetings.

The Executive also advises the Rector when requested to do so.

Meetings

Parish Executive meets on the second Wednesday each month, except January.

COMMITTEES OF PARISH COUNCIL

The Governance of the Diocese Ordinance gives Parish Council authority to establish committees and working parties. Parish Council has established a set of guidelines for its committees which include, *inter alia*, provision that the chairs of its committees must be members of the Parish.

The current committees of Parish Council are:

- Finance Committee
- Schoolhouse Museum Board of Management
- St Johns Care Management Committee
- Property and Maintenance Committee
- Missions Committee
- Risk Management Committee
- Pastoral Care Committee
- Projects Committee

Parish Council appoints a member to each committee, both to share expertise and to ensure each of its members is aware of the breadth of activity occurring within each of its committees. If the chair of a committee is already a Parish Councillor, a separate Parish Council representative is not normally needed. The committees' Terms of Reference are on the Parish Council web site.

ACCOUNTABLE ENTITIES

All Parish entities are accountable and responsible to Parish Council. In particular, the accountability of St John's Care Management Committee and The Schoolhouse Museum Board of Management to Parish Council are made explicit by reason of their being committees of Parish Council.

For Parish Council to discharge its responsibilities effectively, it receives, via the Parish Treasurer, the financial statements of St John's Care and the Schoolhouse Museum on a quarterly basis. At least once each year, responsible officers from both organisations are invited to make a presentation to Parish Council at which time aspects of their operations can be discussed.

All committees are expected to report to Parish Council regularly on their activities and any related financial matters.

2. THE PARISH COUNCIL AGENDA

The following shows the typical agenda for a Parish Council meeting. As with all such documents it is constantly evolving as the needs and interest of Parish Council change. The blue annotations provide some explanation as to how the agenda is constructed.

St John the Baptist Anglican Church, Canberra
Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday DD MM YYYY, 7:00pm, Robertson Room

A G E N D A

Items 1 to 8 are formal matters that appear on every agenda.

We operate a starring system. While all items listed on the agenda form part of the business of the meeting, only those that are starred are discussed before being formally resolved. The unstarred items are matters that often include straightforward reports and those which do not require discussion. Some will have motions and recommended actions attached to them. They are given effect by the adoption of the unstarred items as a group at Item 4.

Under Item 3 any Parish Councillor can request matters be starred for discussion that are otherwise unstarred; they can also ask for new items to be considered under Other Business. It is good practice to have other business items added at the start of meeting, so all members are aware of the full agenda, especially if they have to leave early. That way they cannot be caught unaware by Items being added for discussion after they have left.

In so far as possible, draft motions are included in the agenda. If approved, they appear as resolutions in the minutes from the meeting. Otherwise they just disappear.

In accord with modern practice, and the practice of Synod and Bishop-in-Council, we do not record movers and seconders of motions. Nevertheless, any Parish Councillor can request their name be recorded as abstaining from voting or voting against a motion.

***1 Opening**

***2 Apologies**

***3 Arrangement of Agenda**

Council members may add items under Other Business and/or request items be starred for discussion that are currently unstarred.

***4 Adoption of the Unstarred Items**

Draft Motion:

It is moved that the unstarred items be treated as listed.

***5 Confirmation of Minutes of Parish Council**

Draft Motion:

*It is moved that the Minutes *** be accepted as the record of the meeting.*

6 Matters arising from the Minutes not otherwise on the Agenda

The Reports

There now follows a set of reports, commencing with that from the Rector and the finance reports from the Treasurer. Other financial matters, such as considering and approving the annual budget, also get treated under Item 7.

Reports are also received from various bodies and committees, as required. Not all will appear on each agenda.

On some occasions we invite key people to address Parish Council, including the President of the Schoolhouse Museum Board of Management, or the Executive Officer of St John's Care. In those cases, their reports will appear under Item 7, but we generally arrange the agenda so that they speak at the start of the meeting.

7 Reports and Finance

***7.1 Rector's Report**

***7.2 Finance Report for MM YYYY**

Draft Motion:

It is moved that the Income and Expenditure Statement and Balance Sheet for MM YYYY be received.

7.* Report from ... (committee)

Correspondence Items

Both incoming and outgoing correspondence are noted. In some cases, there will be decisions and formal resolutions concerning specific matters.

8 Correspondence

8.1 Incoming

8.2 Outgoing

Standing Items

Some matters are considered to be of such importance that places are reserved for them on every agenda even though, from time to time, there will be nothing to discuss. They relate mainly to matters of risk and safety.

9 Statutory and Compliance Matters

9.1 Risk Management

9.2 Workplace Health and Safety

9.3 Safe Ministry

Business Items and Other Business

These are the matters, other than those listed formally above, which concern the day-to-day business of Parish Council.

As noted earlier, Other Business is where new matters can be added to the agenda at the start of the meeting

10 Business Items

There may be several of these on each agenda

11 Other Business

Date for the Next Meeting and Closure

We also note the date of the next meeting and close the meeting in prayer.

12 Next Meeting

The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday DD MM YYYY at 7:00pm in the Robertson Room.

***13 Closing Prayer (The Grace)**

3. MANAGING RISK

Managing an organisation includes the management of risk in order to achieve most effectively the organisation's strategic goals. Broadly defined, risks are those matters which inhibit the achievement of strategic goals and affect day-to-day operation.

A major responsibility of Parish Council is to identify and manage the risk environment in which the Parish operates. Risks or vulnerabilities range from financial and reputational, through to property damage and theft, as well as the physical and psychological hazards that may impact parish members.

Parish Council is advised by its Risk Advisory Committee and is supported and guided by its Risk Management Policy² (last revised in March 2022). That policy specifically recognises types of risk, and those parts of the Parish and its operation in which risks can occur. Those in the Parish responsible for handling specific incidences of risk are called *Risk Owners* while those responsible for recognising, managing and minimising risks within the organisation are called *Risk Control Owners*. Figure 1 shows the responsibilities of the Risk Owners and the Control Owners while Figure 2 shows the framework of the Risk Management Policy within which the officers in Figure 1, and Parish Council, operate.

The Risk Management Policy itself is supported by: an Emergency Incidents Policy, which outlines responses to a broad range of possible risks: a Critical incidents Policy, which focuses specifically on medical and mental health emergencies and aggressive behaviours that require immediate response; and a Work Health and Safety Policy.

Risks		Functions	
What are the types of risk?	Who are the Owners?	Where can risk occur?	Who is responsible?
Avoidable death	Rector	Worship	Rector
Serious physical injury	Rector	Family and youth ministry	Family and youth minister
Physical or verbal abuse	Rector	Aged care ministry	Aged care minister
Compliance failure	Rector	Parish office	Rector
Loss of key staff	Rector	St John's Care	EO SJC
Fire	Rector	Car parking	Office administrator
Theft	Parish Council	WHS	Rector
Damage to heritage assets	Parish Council	Financial Management	Treasurer
Loss of or hacked information	Parish Council	Investment management	Treasurer
Damage to buildings and grounds	Parish Council	Schoolhouse Museum	President SHMBOM
Litigation	Diocese (external Owner)	Marketing	Rector
Cash flow	Parish Council	Contracts and legal matters	Parish Council
Reputation	Rector	Strategic management	Parish Council
		ICT and information systems	Rector
		Heritage management	Chair P&M Committee
		Property and garden maintenance	Chair P&M Committee
		Functions and venue management	Office administrator
		Music	Director of Music



These are the Control Owners

Their responsibility is to identify, implement and review control strategies for each of the risk types in their areas of responsibility. They refer difficult situations to and report biannually to the Risk Owners. The Control Owner coverage is currently under review by the Risk Advisory Committee.

Fig. 1. Managing risk in the Parish

² The Diocesan Risk Management Policy, January 2019, is available at <https://anglicancg.org.au/wp-content/uploads/31-Jan-2019-Risk-Management-Policy.pdf>. Our policy is consistent with that document.

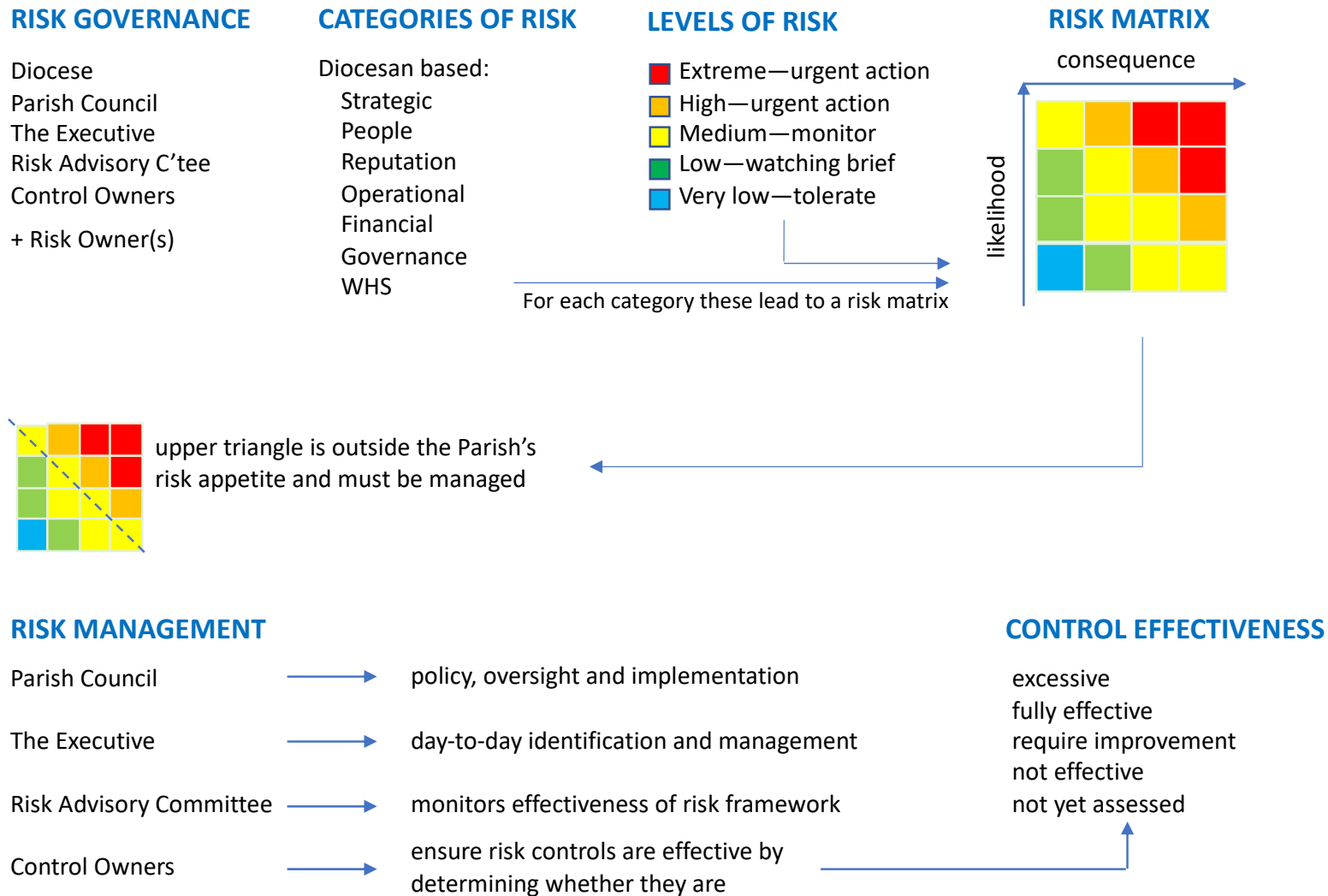


Figure 2. Outline of the structure of the Risk Management Policy. After recognising the governance framework within which the policy is set, it shows how risks are categorised, assessed and managed by the control owners

4. PARISH FINANCES

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The following tables and charts show the planned major income and expenditure categories for the Parish, using the approved 2023 budget³, net of any extraordinary income and expenditure. From time to time the latter categories assist in balancing the annual budget. In the case of 2023 a deficit budget had been approved, noting that the end-of-year deficit will be covered by cash reserves.

As seen, the major sources of normal revenue are weekly giving and fees received for hiring out surface car parking spaces. The major expenditure categories are employee expenses, office administration, our payment to the Diocese and the annual insurance premium.

With the increasing costs of insurance, our annual insurance premium has grown to be among the largest expenditure categories. Building insurance costs are high for St John's because of the requirement to cover the heritage listed church and schoolhouse buildings.

St John's Care and the Schoolhouse Museum maintain their own accounts.

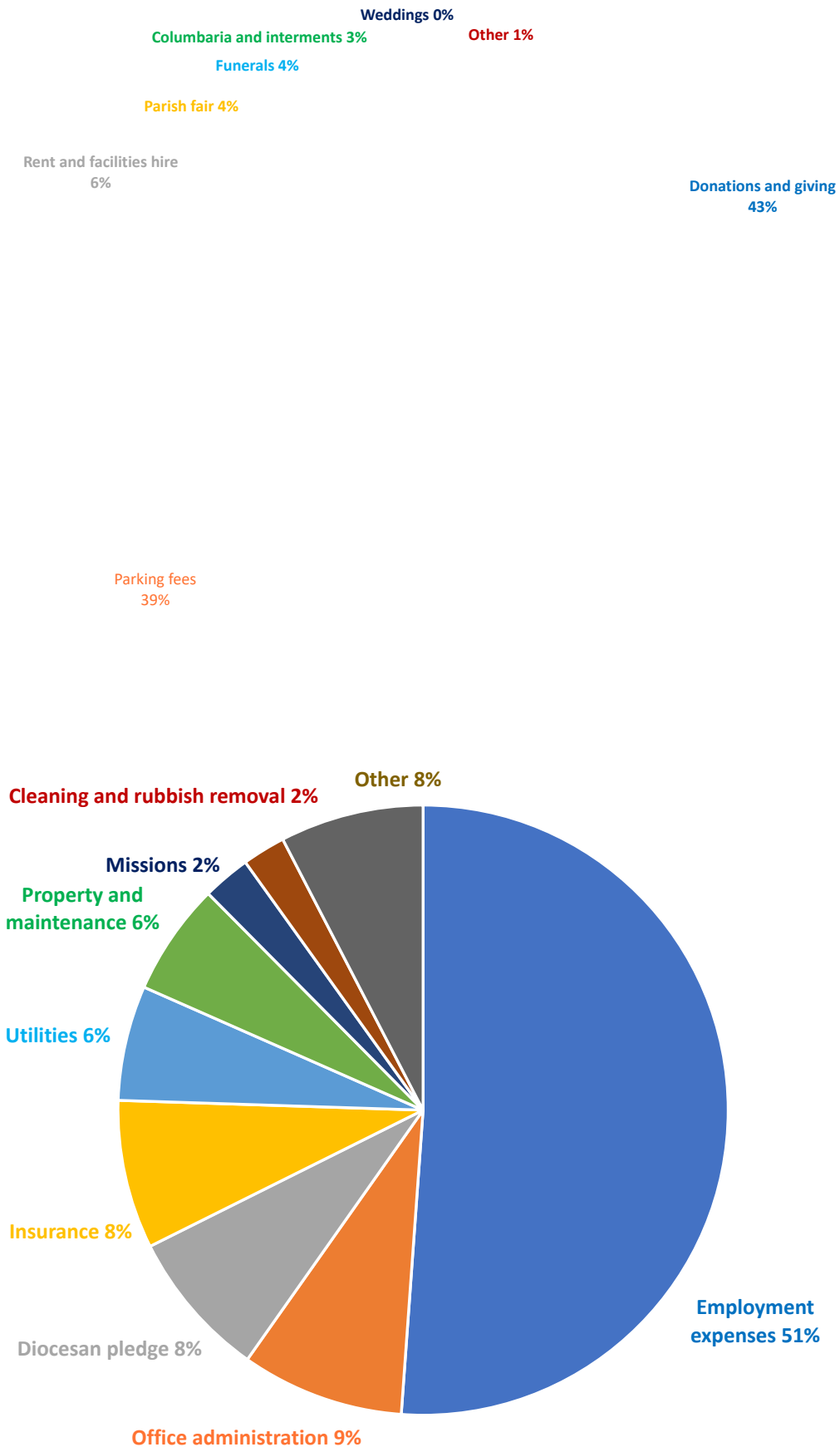
Planned Income (2023)

Category	Amount \$'000	%
Donations and giving	303	43
Parking fees	271	39
Rent and facilities hire	45	6
Parish fair	29	4
Funerals	25	4
Columbaria and interments	18	3
Weddings	3	
Other	7	

Planned Expenditure (2023)

Category	Amount \$'000	%
Employment expenses	403	51
Office administration	68	9
Diocesan pledge	62	8
Insurance	62	8
Utilities	48	6
Property and maintenance	47	6
Missions	20	3
Cleaning and rubbish removal	18	2
Other	60	8

³ Historic data is not used here because the last normal experience of income and expenditure was pre-COVID



The Parish maintains six bank accounts for transacting the business of the Parish. All are held with the Anglican Investment and Development Fund (AIDF). They are:

- a. A cash management account
- b. A main account
- c. An events account (for the fair and similar
- d. A ministry initiatives account
- e. An account for giving by direct funds transfer
- f. An account for those who give via “Anglican Direct”

At the end of each month the balances of the last two are transferred to the main account.

We encourage direct giving by parishioners; see the “Giving” tab under “About Us” on the Parish web site.

Visitors and parishioners may also choose to give through *GiveNow*, an on-line giving platform.

PARISH BUDGET

The annual budget is set by Parish Council at its November or December meetings, on the advice of the Treasurer. It is shaped by our income

Parish Council has determined that we work to a balanced budget; since total income over the past decade has changed little in real terms, our ministry is changed only at the margins from year to year, rather than taking significant decisions on large new expenditures. Without addressing this limitation growth in our ministry is constrained.

While the budget covers the cost of the operations of the parish, there is an opportunity for parishioners and the community to use the facilities of the *National Trust—St John’s Church Heritage Conservation Appeal Fund* to make use of the tax deductibility provisions to support the conservation of the church and other heritage listed parts of the St John’s precinct.

TRUST FUNDS

The Parish also has a number of trust funds that are the result of bequests it has received over the years. Those trusts, their purposes and their balances last reported (31 Dec 2022) are:

Church Trusts

Fund (bequest)	Purpose	Balance \$
Ross White Bequest	For the general purposes of the Parish	31,435
Helen Hartge Bequest	For the general purposes of the Parish	28,626
Alan Salisbury Bequest	For such religious purposes as the Rector and churchwardens see fit	15,484
Joan Duffield Bequest	For the general purposes of the Parish	1,742,866
John Ballard Bequest	For the maintenance and restoration of the Church	6,894
TOTAL		2,043,089

The trust funds of the Parish are invested through the Anglican Church Property Trust (ACPT). Two ACPT investment pools are used by St John's: the Short Term Pool which is 100% cash; and the St John's Reid Canberra Pool, the investment mix of which is set by the Parish. It currently consists of 80% equities and 20% cash. That investment mix is reviewed at least annually by Parish Council.

Trust funds are not used to support the normal running expenses of the Parish but are preserved for projects consistent with the purpose specified by the benefactor, and for significant restoration work on the Church and precinct, or major capital projects.

The Diocese has set up a trust for St John's Care (SJC), established by a generous gift from an anonymous donor, who has been a long-term supporter of St John's Care. These funds are not available for general Parish use.

St Johns' Care Trust

Fund (bequest)	Purpose	Balance \$
The St John's Care Support Trust	To provide a corpus, the income from which is to ensure the employment of key SJC staff	559,029

5. THE NATIONAL TRUST – ST JOHN'S CHURCH HERITAGE CONSERVATION APPEAL FUND

Donations to this fund are tax deductible. The fund is administered through a trust deed by which the Trustees consider submissions relating to the conservation of the heritage-listed St John's Church (1841), the churchyard, the lychgates, the Schoolhouse Museum, the Rectory and surrounding landscape which includes trees and hedges.

6. THE ANGLICAN CHURCH PROPERTY TRUST (ACPT)⁴

The Anglican Church Property Trust, Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn is a Corporate body established under the Anglican Church Property Trust Act 1917 (NSW) and the equivalent Act in the ACT of 1928. It is governed by the Anglican Church Property Trust Ordinance of 1944, as amended.

The Trust holds all church property within the Diocese and all funds passed to the Church for specific purposes. The Trust as a corporate body, is a legal entity, able to enter into contracts, to sue or be sued. The Trust is not a policy making body as Diocesan Policy is established by Synod and the Bishop-in-Council. The Trust acts to assist the mission of the Diocese through the effective and efficient use of Diocesan property and resources.

The membership of the Trust is determined by the Ordinance and comprises of the Bishop and eight other members. Members are elected by Synod and hold office for six years. The Registrar is the Secretary of the Property Trust.

⁴ From the ACPT web site. Accessed January 2020.

7. THE ANGLICAN INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (AIDF)⁵

The Anglican Investment & Development Fund, Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn (AIDF) was established in 1967; it operates under the AIDF Ordinance which includes a diocesan guarantee of the fund and outlines its purposes. It provides loans to parishes and other diocesan agencies, including schools, for buildings or other capital works projects and also makes housing, car and personal loans to clergy and other persons employed by the Diocese.

The AIDF provides fee-free accounts, including access (everyday accounts) and term investments. St John's Parish receives 0.5% rebate of interest for accounts operated by St John's parishioners who agree to such a transfer.

8. THE "ADMIN" CIRCULAR

Each year the Diocese publishes the Administrative Circular ("Admin" circular). To quote from the Registrar's introduction:

This document has been designed to assist parishes and ministry units with a range of administrative matters applying across the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

In order to assist clergy and parishes to understand their entitlements and responsibilities more clearly, the 2023 Administrative Circular has three sections:

- Section A contains a list of key contacts in the ADS (Anglican Diocesan Services) Directorate
- Section B focuses on Clergy Conditions of Service, and addresses the matters of stipends, allowances, motor vehicles, taxation, leave arrangements, insurance, housing and extending ministry.
- Section C comprises of other important information to assist parishes, particularly with respect to key administrative processes in relation to safe ministry and risk and compliance resources, finance matters, Trust funds, property sale and leasing and grant applications.

Web and print versions of this document are available at www.anglicancg.org.au by selecting Administration Documents under the ADS tab.

9. DIOCESAN GOVERNANCE

See <https://anglicancg.org.au/our-diocese/governance/>

SYNOD

The Synod is the governing body of the Diocese. The Bishop is President of Synod. Each Synod lasts for three years; the current Synod (48th) covers 2023-2025. It meets annually, usually in September in Goulburn, although special meetings of Synod are sometimes called.

Synod has a very large membership, which includes three lay representatives of our Parish. Elections for our Synod representatives are held triennially, usually at the same time as the annual election of churchwardens and parish councillors on those particular years.

⁵ Based on the AIDF web site. Accessed January 2019.

We also elect three alternate lay Synod representatives, who take the place of our regular representatives if they cannot attend.

BISHOP-IN-COUNCIL

Bishop-in-Council meets every second month and acts for Synod between meetings of Synod. The Parish doesn't necessarily have anyone on BIC at any given time.

ORDINANCES

The business of the Diocese and its parishes is governed by a series of Ordinances. Effectively they are the statutes by which we operate and can be found at <https://anglicancg.org.au/our-diocese/governance/ordinances/>

10. PARISH WEBSITE

Much of the Parish's reach to the Canberra community is through its website at www.stjohnscanberra.org.

11. PARISH POLICIES

The policies of Parish Council are:

- Master Policy (which sets the framework for the other policies)
- Risk Management Policy
- Critical Incidents Policy
- Email Policy
- Churchyard and Columbaria Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Email Voting by Parish Councillors Policy
- Financial Delegations
 - Financial Authorities and Limits of Delegation
(appendix to the Financial Delegations Policy)
- Video Recording Policy
- Bequests Policy
- Hall and Room Hiring Policy
- WHS Policy
- Emergency Incidents Policy
- Keying Policy

12. HONORARY APPOINTMENTS

The following honorary positions operate in the Parish:

Dr Barbara Hill	Honorary Administrator of the Churchyard	Appointed by Parish Council in 2014
Alan Wilson	Honorary Archivist	Appointed by the Rector on 21 June 2019