

**Archdiocese of Orthodox Parishes
of Russian Tradition in Western Europe
EXARCHATE OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE**

**EPISCOPAL VICARIATE
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**STATUTES
of the
EPISCOPAL VICARIATE
2007**



Published by the Episcopal Vicariate of Great Britain and Ireland

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of Russian Tradition in Western Europe*

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These statutes were adopted in London
on 23 June 2007
by those wishing to establish statutes for the
Episcopal Vicariate of Orthodox Parishes of
Russian Tradition in Great Britain and Ireland.

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THE STATUTES OF THE EPISCOPAL VICARIATE OF ORTHODOX PARISHES OF RUSSIAN TRADITION IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ARTICLE I

THE EPISCOPAL VICARIATE

Section 1: *Definition*

The Episcopal Vicariate of Orthodox Parishes of Russian Tradition in Great Britain and Ireland (hereinafter called 'the Vicariate') is a Vicariate of parishes and eucharistic communities situated in Great Britain and Ireland, and forming part of the Archdiocese of Orthodox Parishes of Russian Tradition in Western Europe – Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (hereinafter called 'the Archdiocese').

Section 2: *Character*

The doctrine, discipline and worship of the Vicariate are those of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, rooted in the Holy Tradition and taught by the Holy Scriptures, the Ecumenical and Provincial Councils and the Holy Fathers.

Section 3: *Language*

The working language of the Vicariate is English. The language or languages used in parishes, eucharistic communities and monastic communities, and in the Vicariate Council and Assembly, shall be determined by these bodies themselves.

Section 4: *Membership*

The members of the Vicariate are those Orthodox Christians who live in Great Britain and Ireland under the authority of an Assistant Bishop appointed in accordance with the Statutes of the Archdiocese, receiving communion from his clergy. Voting members are those registered on the Vicariate roll and abiding by the provisions of these statutes.

Section 5: *Rules*

The Vicariate is governed according to the Statutes of the Archdiocese and the internal regulation of the relationship between the Archdiocese and the Vicariate, by the following rules.

ARTICLE II

THE BISHOP

Section 1: *Definition*

The Assistant Bishop to whom the Vicariate is entrusted (hereinafter called 'the Bishop') shall exercise pastoral authority with the blessing of the Archbishop and with the prerogatives of a diocesan bishop, in accordance with the Decree of the Council of Moscow of 2/15 April 1918, *On vicar bishops*, Article 2.

Section 2: *Functions*

- a. As the bishop entrusted with pastoral responsibility for the parishes and communities of the Vicariate, the Bishop shall:
 - i. offer the eucharistic sacrifice 'on behalf of all and for all';
 - ii. intercede for the Vicariate and pray for its members 'that they may be one';
 - iii. supervise the liturgical life of the Vicariate;
 - iv. distribute the Holy Chrism and antimensia which he receives from the Patriarchal Exarch of Western Europe to the priests and parishes of the Vicariate;
 - v. either personally or through the presbyterate receive new members into communion with the Church;
 - vi. represent the Archdiocese with the local religious and political authorities and act in its name – after having previously informed the Archbishop should the situation arise – and in all local administrative and juridical affairs in civic life and in local inter-religious meetings, and in any synod or council.
 - vii. make regular reports to the Archbishop on the life of the Vicariate.
- b. As teacher the Bishop shall:
 - i. proclaim the Gospel and seek to spread the Christian faith within the boundaries of the Vicariate;
 - ii. expound the fullness of the Christian faith in accordance with the Tradition of the Orthodox Church and ensure that this fullness is faithfully preserved in the teaching of all who are under his authority;

- iii. be responsible for the Christian education of the clergy and laity of the Vicariate.
- c. As pastor the Bishop shall:
- i. exercise either personally or through the presbyterate the power given by Christ to the Apostles to bind and to loose;
 - ii. prepare and ordain to the priesthood candidates who have, whenever possible, been proposed by the local congregation concerned, after consultation with the community and with the Presbytery;
 - iii. ordain members of the diaconate, sub-deacons, readers and preachers after consultation with the community concerned;
 - iv. appoint and transfer clergy within the limits of the Vicariate after consultation with the Presbytery and with the community or the communities concerned;
 - v. exercise pastoral discipline over clergy and laity in accordance with the statutes of the Archdiocese ;
 - vi. regularly visit the communities in the Vicariate;
 - vii. establish parishes and eucharistic communities within the Vicariate and determine the scope of their activities, after consultation with the Presbytery, subject to validation by the Archbishop in conformity with Article 4 of the Statutes of the Archdiocese;
 - viii. supervise monastic life within the Vicariate, establishing monastic communities and confirming in office or, where appropriate, appointing their superiors;
 - ix. consecrate churches and permanent holy tables;
 - x. act as custodian, either personally or delegated through the clergy, in the name of the Vicariate, of any object that has been consecrated for use in the worship of the Church, and retain the right to determine its disposition when it is no longer in use;
 - xi. serve as President of the Clergy-Laity Assembly (hereinafter called 'the Assembly') and the Vicariate Council (hereinafter called 'the Council');
 - xii. serve as Chairman of the Presbytery.

- xiii. establish an administrative office and appoint staff as necessary.

Section 3: *Retirement*

The retirement of the Bishop is governed by the Statutes of the Archdiocese.

Section 4: *Vacancy*

In the event of the death, resignation or retirement of the Bishop in charge of the Vicariate, a meeting of the Assembly is called by the Archbishop to designate by voting a candidate for the succession. If the candidate is not already a bishop, his candidacy is then subject to the vote of the General Assembly of the Archdiocese according to the procedures set out in Articles 33 and 41 of the Statutes of the Archdiocese.

Section 5: *Financial Support*

The Vicariate shall be responsible for housing the Bishop and for his financial support.

ARTICLE III

THE PRESBYTERY

Section 1: *Purpose*

The Presbytery is the body which brings together all the presbyters ('elders') serving in the Vicariate to assist the Bishop in fulfilling his role as pastor.

Section 2: *Membership*

- a. The Bishop and priests permanently assigned in the Vicariate constitute the Presbytery and have the right to vote.
- b. All members of the diaconate permanently assigned in the Vicariate have the right to attend meetings of the Presbytery but without the right to vote.
- c. The Bishop may, with the approval of the Presbytery, invite retired clergy to attend its meetings, but without the right to vote.

Section 3: *Election of Vicar-General*

The Presbytery shall elect by a secret ballot for a three-year term a Vicar-General from among the Presbytery of the Vicariate. The Vicar-General may not be immediately re-elected at the end of his second three-year term.

Section 4: *The Vicar-General*

The duties of the Vicar-General shall be:

- a. to act as Secretary and Convenor of the Presbytery;
- b. to serve as an *ex officio* voting member of the Council;
- c. to acquaint himself with the parishes and local communities and their problems;
- d. to co-ordinate provision of presbyters when any presbyter appointed by the Bishop is absent.

Section 5: *Meetings*

The Presbytery shall meet at least twice a year on a Saturday or holiday mutually agreed by the Bishop and the Vicar-General with at least four weeks' notice of the meeting given to members. The Vicar-General must call further meetings of the Presbytery if requested by the Bishop or by one third of its voting members, always on a Saturday or holiday with four weeks' notice of the meeting.

Section 6: *Procedures*

- a. The Bishop shall be Chairman of the Presbytery.
- b. The Vicar-General shall act as Secretary and Convenor of the Presbytery and, in the absence of the Bishop, as its Chairman.
- c. The Presbytery shall choose a minuting secretary from among its members. Minutes will be circulated to all members of the Presbytery, to all deacons with the right to attend, and a summary to the Secretary of the Assembly.

ARTICLE IV

THE CLERGY-LAITY ASSEMBLY

Section 1: *Purpose*

The Clergy-Laity Assembly is the body in which the Bishop, clergy and laity of the Vicariate take part together in the furthering of its life, 'speaking the truth in love' (Eph. 4:15).

Section 2: *Functions*

The Assembly:

- a. discusses and makes recommendations on matters of policy affecting the Vicariate as a whole;
- b. initiates and discusses and approves measures to strengthen the Orthodox Christian faith, witness and mission, and the life of the Vicariate;
- c. discusses collaboration or exchange of information with outside bodies and other Christian denominations;
- d. discusses financial measures to achieve these aims, including the Vicariate budget, and the levels of contribution from the parishes to the Vicariate;
- e. gives guidance and recommendations to the Council concerning the acquisition, encumbrance, or disposal of property of whatever nature belonging to the Vicariate;

Section 3: *Chairman of the Assembly*

- a. The Chairman shall open and close meetings. He shall have both a vote and a casting vote if there is a tie.
- b. The Chairman of the Assembly shall be the Bishop, or in his absence the Vicar-General.
- c. Should the Archbishop be present at the Assembly, he acts as Chairman of the Meeting

Section 4: *Membership*

The Assembly shall be composed as follows:

- a. Members with the right to speak and to vote:
 - i. the Bishop;
 - ii. any presbyter permanently assigned in the Vicariate;

- iii. any abbot or abbess of a monastic community of three or more members or a representative appointed by him or her;
 - iv. one or more members of the laity or of the diaconate elected by each parish or, in the absence of a member, an alternate. The number of members to be elected by a parish is never to be less than one, and is to be increased by one for every fifty votes cast in the most recent Vicariate elections;
 - v. a fixed number of members of the laity or of the diaconate elected by the Vicariate as a whole, in accordance with the bye-laws of the Vicariate.
- b. Persons with the right to speak but not to vote:
- i. any member of the diaconate permanently assigned in the Vicariate not elected as a member of the Assembly;
 - ii. one layperson from each eucharistic community chosen by the Bishop on the recommendation of the presiding presbyter or bishop. Such a layperson may continue to represent a eucharistic community if elected as one of the members of the Assembly chosen by the Vicariate as a whole;
 - iii. any person invited by the Council to attend regularly or on a specific occasion or to speak on a specific subject.

Section 5: *Qualification for Lay Members*

Lay members of the Assembly must be communicant members of the Orthodox Church and on the electoral roll of the Vicariate (hereinafter called 'the Vicariate Roll').

Section 6: *Nomination, Election and Replacement of Members*

- a. Members chosen by the Vicariate as a whole:
- i. one third of the members from the Vicariate as a whole shall be chosen each year for a three year term by those on the Vicariate Roll by majority vote;
 - ii. nominations must be received by the Secretary of the Council not less than twenty-eight days prior to the date of the election and must be signed by the proposer and

- seconded. Nominations must indicate the willingness of the nominee to serve;
- iii. voting shall take place by secret ballot after the Liturgy or, in the absence of a priest, after a prayer service on the last Sunday in October and/or the first Sunday in November. The voting shall be supervised by three persons: in a parish chosen by the parish council, in a local congregation chosen by the presiding presbyter and in a monastic community chosen by its superior;
 - iv. no person may hold more than one proxy, which must be in the form of a letter to the supervisors of the voting. No postal vote is ordinarily permitted. If a local congregation experiences difficulties with the normal procedure, it may apply to the Council, through the Secretary, for permission to conduct a postal vote;
 - v. as soon as voting has been completed, ballot papers are to be sealed in an envelope under the signatures of the supervisors of the voting and posted, recorded delivery, to the Secretary of the Council. They are to be opened in the presence of the Election Committee who will supervise the count and, through the Secretary, will announce the results;
 - vi. if an elected member representing the Vicariate dies or resigns, another will be elected at the next Vicariate election to serve for the remainder of the original term;
 - vii. if a member elected by the Vicariate as a whole has not attended the Assembly for three consecutive meetings, he or she shall automatically be considered to have resigned and a replacement will be elected at the next Vicariate election to serve for the remainder of the original term.
- b. Members chosen by a parish:
- i. members and their alternates elected by a parish shall be chosen at a parish general meeting by those members of the parish who are on that parish's electoral roll (hereinafter called 'the Parish Roll');
 - ii. the names of such members and their alternates shall be communicated to the Secretary of the Council by the

- secretaries of the parishes concerned;
- iii. if an elected member representing a parish dies or resigns, he will be succeeded by his alternate until the next regular or extraordinary meeting of the parish concerned.

Section 7: *Requirements for Representation*

A member or members elected by a parish to the Assembly, or their alternates, shall not attend its meetings until the parish has fulfilled its financial obligations to the Vicariate for the last completed financial year, or has given the Council a satisfactory explanation of its failure to do so.

Section 8: *Arrangements for Meetings*

- a. The Assembly decides the time, place and frequency of its ordinary meetings, which are to be held not less than once and normally twice a year.
- b. An Extraordinary Meeting of the Assembly may be called by the Bishop or the Council, and the Council must do so within thirty days of such a meeting being requested by one third of the members of the Assembly.
- c. There shall be thirty days' notice of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Assembly.

Section 9: *Agenda*

- a. Written suggestions for the agenda may be made to the Secretary of the Vicariate (hereinafter called 'the Secretary') up to twenty-one days before the date of a meeting.
- b. The Secretary consults with the Bishop and with such other members of the Council as may be advisable, and then draws up the agenda, which should be dispatched to members of the Assembly not less than ten days before the meeting.
- c. The agenda may be changed by a majority vote of the Assembly.

Section 10: *Quorum*

One third of the lay and one third of the presbyter members, taken separately, shall constitute a quorum.

Section 11: *Validation*

- a. No resolution of the Assembly shall be valid if the Bishop formally expresses his disapproval of it within eight days of the close of the meeting if he has been present; or within fifteen days of notification of the resolution to him if he has been absent.
- b. Should the office of the Bishop be vacant, the Archbishop may formally disapprove a resolution of the Assembly within fifteen days of its notification to him.
- c. If a resolution is not approved by the Bishop under sub clause a or b of this section, then it should be referred back to the Assembly for the resolution to be discussed and voted upon again. If passed, then such resolution of the Assembly shall not be valid if the Archbishop formally expresses his disapproval within fifteen days of notification of the resolution to him, and the decision of the Archbishop will be final and binding on the Assembly and the Bishop

Section 12: *Secretary and Minutes*

- a. The minutes of the meetings of the Assembly shall be prepared by the Secretary if necessary with the assistance of a minuting secretary. In their absence the Assembly shall appoint substitutes.
- b. The minutes shall be checked by the Chairman and the President before distribution and shall be signed by the Chairman after their approval by the Assembly at its next meeting.
- c. Within thirty days of the Assembly's adjournment the minutes shall be mailed to each member, together with notice of any formal disapproval of a resolution by the Bishop or Archbishop.

Section 13: *Election Committee*

- a. Every three years the Assembly shall choose between three and five persons, at least three of whom shall be members of the Assembly, to form the Election Committee. Members may serve for more than one term.
- b. In advance of each Assembly and Council election, or any

election to the office of Bishop, the Council shall select three persons from the Election Committee to serve as the Election Committee for that particular election and appoint an organiser of the Election Committee from among them. No members of any particular Election committee shall be a candidate or the relative of a candidate in that election. If a member of any Election Committee withdraws after his selection, the Secretary in consultation with the Chairman shall appoint a replacement from among other candidate members.

- c. The Secretary shall be an *ex officio* additional member of any Election Committee except one set up to oversee any election in which the current Secretary is a candidate.
- d. The votes in any other secret ballot taken for the Assembly shall be counted by a minimum of two persons chosen by the Assembly by agreement or lot.

ARTICLE V

THE VICARIATE COUNCIL

Section 1: Purpose

The Vicariate Council (hereinafter called 'the Council') is the executive body which is responsible in law for the general control of the administration of the Vicariate.

Section 2: Functions

The Council shall:

- a. prepare the agenda and other arrangements for the meetings of the Assembly;
- b. prepare the budget for approval by the Trustees and presentation to the Assembly;
- c. establish and appoint members of committees to study proposals;
- d. invite persons to meetings of the Assembly as observers;
- e. carry out whatever duties are delegated to them by the Trustees

The term “Trustees” shall mean the persons from time to time acting as trustees under the Constitution of the Vicariate.

Section 3: *Membership*

All members of the Council must be members of the Assembly. There shall be between eight and twelve members of the Council as follows:

- a. the bishop as Chairman (the Chairman will also have a casting vote);
- b. the Vicar-General;
- c. the Secretary, who shall not be a member of the clergy;
- d. the Treasurer (hereinafter called ‘the Treasurer’) who shall not be a member of the clergy;
- e. four members of the clergy;
- f. up to four members of the laity.

Section 4: *Elections*

- a. Elections to the Council shall take place at the first meeting of the Assembly after the annual election of members from the Vicariate as a whole.
- b. No voting by proxy is permitted in elections to the Council.
- c. Any candidate nominated must indicate his or her willingness to serve, either in writing or orally at an Assembly meeting prior to the election.
- d. The four clergy members shall be elected for a three year term by majority vote at the autumn Assembly meeting after the Presbytery has elected the Vicar General.
- e. At the subsequent autumn meeting of the Assembly four members of the laity shall be elected for a three year term by majority vote.
- f. At the subsequent autumn meeting of the Assembly the Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected for a three year term by majority vote.

Section 5: *Arrangements for Meetings*

The Council is convened at the request of the Bishop, or by four of its members by letter or telephone with ten days’ notice, and there should be at least two meetings in each calendar year.

Section 6: *Quorum*

A half of the members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7: *Procedure, Voting and Decisions*

- a. The role of the Chairman shall be the same as at meetings of the Assembly.
- b. Majority decisions of the Council become effective unless the Bishop expresses formal disapproval within eight days of the meeting if he has been present, or, if he is absent, within fifteen days; or alternatively if there is a vacancy, the person presiding in the Bishop's place expresses formal disapproval in the same manner.
- c. If the decision of the Council referred to under paragraph b of this Section is formally disapproved by the Bishop (or the person presiding in the Bishop's place), then the decision will be referred back to the Council for the resolution to be discussed and voted upon again. If passed, then no such decision of the Council shall be valid if the Archbishop formally expresses his disapproval of it within fifteen days of notification of the decision to him, and the decision of the Archbishop shall be final and binding on the Council and the Bishop.

Section 8: *Secretary and Minuting Secretary*

- a. At the Assembly meeting after the annual elections to the Assembly a minuting secretary may be appointed to assist the Secretary.
- b. The Secretary is responsible for sending both the agenda and minutes to members of the Council after approval by the Bishop in the same manner as for the Assembly.
- c. The Secretary shall liaise with the organiser of the Election Committee of which the Secretary shall be an additional *ex officio* member, to ensure that the count in every election is conducted properly.
- d. The Secretary shall be responsible for liaising with local congregations, as per the provisions of Article VIII, to ensure the Vicariate Roll is properly compiled from the Parish Rolls and that no name appears on it twice.

- e. The Secretary shall use his or her best endeavours so that the largest possible number of members of the Vicariate are on the Vicariate Roll.

Section 9: *Treasurer*

The Treasurer shall be responsible for:

- a. keeping the Vicariate accounts;
- b. recommending to the Council and Assembly measures for improving Vicariate finances;
- c. liaising with the Treasurer of the Archdiocese with regard to financial matters.
- d. prepare financial records and documentation as required by the Trustees.

ARTICLE VI

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

Section 1: *Definitions*

The life of the Vicariate as a sacramental community is manifested in a given place or area through the regular celebration of the Eucharist under the local presidency of the Bishop, or a presbyter appointed by the Bishop.

Local congregations can be of three kinds:

- a. those established communities which have a formal structure as set down in Sections 5–10 of this Article (hereinafter called 'Parishes');
- b. less established communities having as much of the formal structure set out below for parishes as is, in the view of the Bishop, required for the regulation of their communal life (hereinafter called 'Eucharistic Communities');
- c. monastic communities as defined and described in Article VII.

Section 2: *Function*

A local congregation, whether constituted as a parish or as a eucharistic community, serves as a centre of Church life in which the members of the royal priesthood, clergy and laity:

- a. realise the fellowship of the Church in its sacramental life and prayer;
- b. proclaim the Gospel and teach the Orthodox faith;
- c. work together 'for the building up of the body of Christ' (Eph 4:12) through pastoral concern and care, both within the Church and in the community amongst whom they live.

Section 3: *Presiding Bishop or Presbyter*

- a. The parish or eucharistic community has at its head the bishop or presbyter to whom the Bishop delegates his ministry of local oversight and who by virtue of his ordination and the authority given him by the Bishop in appointing him, shall:
 - i. celebrate the Holy Mysteries and lead the community in prayer;
 - ii. take responsibility for ensuring that the Gospel is preached and the Orthodox faith is taught;
 - iii. act as Pastor and spiritual father of his flock, treating all equally, 'for there is nowith respect of persons with God' (Rom 2:11);
 - iv. supervise the worship of the community and ensure that the appearance of the place of worship is suitable for liturgical use;
- b. The Bishop or presbyter who in the name of the Bishop blesses the activities of his community, shall be informed and consulted concerning any significant initiative in the life of the community; and for his part shall consult with the community, so that there may always be unity, cooperation and mutual trust.

Section 4: *Establishment and Dissolution of a Parish or Eucharistic Community*

- a. Any group of members of the Vicariate may ask to be recognised as a parish or as a eucharistic community by the Bishop, who shall do so only after consultation with the Presbytery and the Council, and subject to validation by the Archbishop.

- b. If the Bishop feels that a parish or a eucharistic community has ceased or should cease to function as such, he may, after consultation with the Presbytery and the Council, dissolve it, in which event its representative shall cease to attend meetings of the Assembly.

Section 5: *Definition of a Parish*

The parish is a community, having at its head a Bishop or presbyter, whose members have accepted responsibility in accordance with these Statutes for the maintenance and development of Church life in a particular place or area, and who have undertaken to organise themselves under elected parish officers and with a parish council.

Section 6: *The Parish Electoral Roll*

- a. Any Orthodox Christian, eighteen years or above who has received Communion in any local congregation within the previous year, who has been resident in the area covered by the Vicariate for at least six months, may apply in writing to the presiding bishop or presbyter under Section 3a above for inclusion on the Roll of that community. The letter must state that the person concerned is not currently on the Roll of another community.
- b. It is the responsibility of the parish secretary to provide applicants with a form to fill in giving the details required for parish records.
- c. In the event of a person transferring from one local congregation to another, the date on which the transfer takes effect is 1 October following their request in writing to do so.
- d. Names are added to or removed from the Roll under the authority of the parish priest; if the decision is not acceptable to the person concerned appeal may be made to the Bishop, whose decision shall be final.
- e. The Roll is submitted by each community to the Vicariate Secretary by the person responsible under Article VIII Section 2a below.

Section 7: *Parish Meetings*

- a. Parishes should hold meetings regularly, but in any event at least once a year. All parish meetings shall be announced at every Sunday Liturgy or prayer service in the three weeks prior to the date of the meeting, and also by letter and/or email to the members of the Parish at least twenty-one days before the date of the meeting.
- b. The functions of the parish meeting shall be:
 - i. to elect for a three-year term one or more voting representative and an alternate or alternates to the Assembly (cf. Art. IV S4 (a) iv).
 - ii. at the intervals and according to procedure laid down by each parish's statutes or bye-laws to elect the officers of the parish and other members of the parish council;
 - iii. regularly to discuss, initiate and approve measures to strengthen the life of the parish;
 - iv. give guidance and recommendations to the parish council concerning the acquisition, encumbrance, or disposal of property of whatever nature belonging to the parish.
- c. The chairman of the parish meeting will be the bishop or priest of the parish or, at his request such other member of the parish, and shall have a second casting vote in the event of a tie. With the approval of the parish council, the chairman may invite other persons to attend and speak but without the right to vote.
- d. A list of all decisions of a parish meeting shall be communicated by its chairman to the Bishop and shall be valid unless he expresses formal disapproval within thirty days of receipt.

Section 8: *Parish Officers*

Among the officers of the parish shall be:

- a. a parish warden who, as senior lay officer of the parish, shall under the guidance of the parish council, be responsible for the care of parish property, the provision of supplies for

church use, and full lay participation in all the practical aspects of parish life;

- b. a secretary of the parish, who shall keep the minutes of parish and parish council meetings, be responsible for correspondence with the Council and the preparation of the Parish Roll;
- c. a treasurer, who shall not be a presbyter or in the pay of the parish council, and who shall be responsible for the preparation and presentation of the parish budget.

Section 9: *The Parish Council*

The parish council is responsible in law for the general control of the administration of the parish. Its purpose is to present to the parish meeting proposals for the furtherance of parish life. The parish council may establish committees to study proposals for and implement decisions, and shall appoint the members of any such committees.

- a. The members of the parish council shall be:
 - i. any member of the episcopate, presbyterate or diaconate assigned to the parish (members of the diaconate have the right to attend but not to vote);
 - ii. the parish warden, treasurer and secretary;
 - iii. the number of lay members fixed by the statutes or bye-laws of the parish.
- b. The bishop or priest of the parish shall be the chairman of the parish council, and has a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- c. The chairman of the parish council may, with the agreement of the parish council, invite other persons to attend a parish council meeting but without the right to vote.
- d. If the bishop or priest of the parish disagrees with a decision of the parish council his disagreement is recorded in the minutes and the matter is referred to a parish meeting for further discussion.

Section 10: *Parish Bye-Laws*

- a. Each parish shall and each eucharistic community may, adopt a set of statutes or bye-laws or articles of association, and a copy of these as originally promulgated or amended

from time to time shall be sent to the Bishop and shall be valid unless he expresses formal disapproval within three months of receipt. A copy shall be sent simultaneously to the Vicariate Secretary.

- b. In the event that the Bishop expresses his formal disapproval within three months of such set of statutes or bye-laws or articles of association being referred to him, then the matter shall be referred back to such parish or Eucharistic community for further discussion, and if the Bishop's objections are not agreed the matter will be referred to the Archbishop whose decision shall be final and binding on the Bishop and the parish or community.
- c. All such statutes or bye-laws must be consistent with the current Statutes of the Vicariate and the Archdiocese.

Section 11: *Representation in the General Assembly of the Archdiocese*

Each Parish of the Vicariate is represented at the General Assembly of the Archdiocese, according to the Statutes of the Archdiocese.

ARTICLE VII

MONASTIC COMMUNITIES

Section 1: *Definition*

A monastic community is, for the purpose of these Statutes, a local eucharistic community composed of three or more monks or nuns living according to the monastic tradition of the Church under the leadership of an abbot or abbess and the supervision of the Bishop.

Section 2: *Function*

The primary function of a monastic community is to further the development of an intensive life of prayer and to share it with the Church at large.

Section 3: *Representation in the Assembly of the Vicariate*

A monastic community's representative in the Assembly is its Superior who has the right to vote and who may appoint a substitute from within the community with the same right.

Section 4: *Electoral Roll*

The preparation of the Electoral Roll of a monastic community is the responsibility of its head, who shall be guided by the procedures laid down in Article VIII. The names of members of the Vicariate who are not monks or nuns and therefore not, strictly speaking, members of the community may be included on the Roll.

Section 5: *Establishment and Dissolution of Monastic Communities*

Monastic communities are established and dissolved by the Bishop after consultation with the Presbytery and the Assembly, and subject to validation by the Archbishop.

ARTICLE VIII

THE VICARIATE ELECTORAL ROLL

Section 1: *Qualification for the Vicariate Electoral Roll ('the Vicariate Roll')*

Any Orthodox Christian:-

- a. who is eighteen years of age and above;
- b. who has been resident in the area covered by the Vicariate for a continuous period of six months;
- c. has received Communion in the Vicariate within the previous year; and
- d. states in writing that he or she intends to remain resident within the area covered by the Vicariate for at least a further year

may apply to be included on the Vicariate Roll by requesting that his or her name be added to the Electoral Roll of a particular local congregation and any person on the electoral roll of a local

congregation is automatically entitled to be added to the Vicariate Roll subject to Section 3 of the Article VIII. Voting rights are restricted to members resident in the area covered by the Vicariate.

Section 2: *Compilation of the Vicariate Roll*

- a. The Secretary shall compile the Vicariate Roll for the following twelve month period annually, on the basis of the electoral Rolls valid for 30th September, compiled by the persons responsible, namely:
 - i. for parishes, the secretary of the parish council, under the authority of the parish priest;
 - ii. for the eucharistic communities, the presiding bishop or presbyter;
 - iii. for monastic communities, the abbot or abbess concerned.
- b. If no reply has been received from the responsible person by the end of September the Secretary shall at once inform the Bishop. If the required information has not been received by the middle of October, the community in question may not vote in the annual elections for the Assembly, or in any other election due to take place less than two weeks after the relevant information is in fact received.

Section 3: *Maintenance of the Vicariate Roll*

No name may be removed from the Roll as submitted by a community unless:

- a. the church member involved so requests; or
- b. the person responsible under Section 2a in another community has stated in writing that the name will be included in that community's Roll from the following October 1st; or
- c. the person responsible under Section 2a and for a parish the secretary of the parish under the authority of the parish priest, has written to the church member, at his last recorded address, giving him one months' notification that his name will be deleted; or
- d. the church member is removed by the Bishop or Archbishop

- for acting in a manner which may reasonably be interpreted as being contrary to the interests of the local congregation, the Vicariate or the Archdiocese; or
- e. the church member involved has died.

ARTICLE IX

CHURCH COURTS AND CANONICAL PROCEDURE

Section I: *Church Courts*

- a. Every member of the Vicariate is entitled to due canonical procedure in the courts of the Church.
- b. A subsidiary of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal (Disciplinary Commission) may be created in the Vicariate with the blessing of the Archbishop. It has exclusive competence within the geographical limits of the Vicariate for all questions described in Article 88 of the Statutes of the Archdiocese. Its composition is to be determined by the Bishop in charge of the Vicariate and the appeal procedures are those described in Article 92 of the Statutes of the Archdiocese.

ARTICLE X

BYE-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1: *Bye-Laws*

The Assembly shall have the power to enact bye-laws for the purpose of regulating the administration of Vicariate activities, provided that these bye-laws are consistent with the Statutes as currently in effect. To be enacted such bye-laws shall require a simple majority of those present and voting.

Section 2: *Amendments*

- a. Any proposal for an amendment to the Statutes must be communicated to the Bishop and signed by two members of the Council within the time limit laid down in Article IV Section 9, and the Bishop shall then place the proposal on the agenda for the next meeting of the Council for discussion before presentation to the Trustees.

- b. Any proposed modification to the Statutes of the Vicariate must have been previously submitted for approval by the Archbishop after consultation with the Council of the Archdiocese.

ARTICLE XI

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Until the first meeting of the Assembly under these Statutes the following persons shall form a Steering Committee whose powers include all the powers of the Vicariate Council and whose main functions are to take such formal and procedural steps as are necessary before such meeting held under the provisions of these Statutes and the first Vicariate Council takes office:

1. Bishop Basil of Amphipolis of 94a Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6JT
2. Father John Marks of 'Touchstone', Shute Lane, Combe Martin EX34 OEU
3. Father Alexander Fostiropoulos of 99 Kenilworth Avenue, London SW19 7LP
4. Mr Edward Roberson of 13 Carver Road, Herne Hill, London SE24 9LS
5. Mrs Gillian Crow of 6 Maiden Place, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HZ