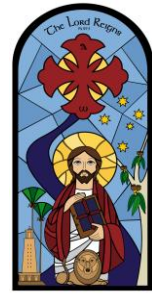




**Coptic Orthodox Church
Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions
Parish Council Elections Process
(2022)**



COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH
+ DIOCESE OF SYDNEY +
& AFFILIATED REGIONS
NSW • QLD • NT



29th October 2022

Dear Parish Members

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

The Constitution of the Coptic Orthodox Church Diocese of Sydney & its affiliated regions was adopted on 11 September 2022 (**Constitution**). In accordance with Rule 3 of the Constitution, the Parishes should now hold elections in order to establish a new Parish Council for each Parish.

The Parish Council Election Date has been set for **Sunday 4 December from 8am to 2pm**. Set out below is the detailed process for the conduct of the elections. Any questions or concerns should be directed to nominations@sydneycopts.org

The Constitution provides that Parish Council is intended to be an inclusive representation of the Parish, including male, female, young and older members. As such, all Parish members are encouraged to participate in the election process.

The Parish Council election process comprises the following:

- 1) **Parish Council Nomination Process:** The process for nomination of members of the Parish for election to the Parish Council.
- 2) **Conditions for Nomination:** The conditions for nomination, accepting a nomination and approving the nomination (**Conditions**) which are set out at the back of the Nomination Form.
- 3) **Parish Council Voter Registration Process:** the process for registration of voters and the establishment and maintenance of the voting register for the elections.
- 4) **Parish Council Election Process:** the process for conducting Parish Council elections.
- 5) **Nomination Form:** to be completed by any member of the Parish who wishes to nominate either themselves or another person for election to the Parish Council. **The Nomination Form and the Conditions must be printed and distributed together.**
- 6) **Registration Form** to be completed by any member of the Parish who wishes to vote in the Parish Council Elections. Only registered voters will be eligible to vote.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, THE NOMINATION FORM, THE CONDITIONS AND THE REGISTRATION FORMS ARE DISPLAYED ON THE NOTICE BOARD OF YOUR CHURCH



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PROCEDURE FOR NOMINATIONS

Recommendation to each Parish: it is recommended and encouraged that each Parish secure at least 3 more nominations than is required. For example, if the Parish requires 7 elected members, then it is recommended that at least 10 nominations be obtained. If the Parish requires 9 elected members, then it is recommended that at least 12 nominations be obtained.

- 1) Every Parish must hold a Parish Council Election on **Sunday 4 December 2022 from 8am to 2pm (Election Date)** unless Rule 3(10) of the Constitution applies.
- 2) Any Parish member who meets the Conditions may be nominated for election to Parish Council.
- 3) Starting from **6 November 2022**, any person who satisfies the Conditions set out in the Nomination Form is eligible to be nominated for election to the Parish Council.
- 4) Any person who currently serves on the Board of Deacons or any parish council will be deemed to have already served one term (regardless of their current length of service) and may be nominated for election to the Parish Council for one term.
- 5) The Nomination Forms will be available on the Diocese website and Diocese Facebook group for download. Hard copy Nomination Forms will be available at the Parish.
- 6) The Nomination Form must be signed by the person nominated as proof of his or her agreement to be elected to the Parish Council. In accordance with Rule 3(5) of the Constitution the Nomination Form must also be signed by seven (7) other members of the Parish and endorsed by one of the Reverend Fathers of the same Parish.
- 7) In accordance with Rule 3(2)(C) of the Constitution, each nominee must indicate on their Nomination Form if they have the necessary skills and experience to be elected to the role of Secretary or Treasurer of the Parish

Council. This includes their current occupation or any relevant skills, experience and training.

- 8) Anyone signing a nomination form in support of a nominee must:
 - a. Be a member of the Parish;
 - b. Personally know and support the person nominated; and
 - c. Be registered to vote in the Parish Council elections in that Parish.

- 9) The Nomination Form can then be submitted to the current Secretary of the Parish (**Election Representative**) either in hard copy or via electronic mail **before 5pm on 20 November, 2022**.

- 10) If the Nomination Form is submitted in hard copy to the Elections Representative, the Elections Representative must provide the member with a written receipt. If the Nomination Form is submitted via electronic mail, the Elections Representative must provide a return email confirming receipt of the Nomination Form.

- 11) The Elections Representative will then submit the Nomination Forms to the Parish Priests for approval.
 - a. Every nomination must be signed by at least one Parish Priest.
 - b. The Parish Priest may only reject a nomination if the Parish Priest reasonably believes that the nominee does not meet the Conditions for nomination.
 - c. If a Parish Priest rejects a nominee, then that Parish Priest must contact the nominee directly to explain why the nomination was rejected.

- 12) A list of the nominees for each Parish attaching all approved Nomination Forms must be submitted to the election committee via email at nominations@sydneycopts.org

- 13) Once confirmed, the Election Representative will publish the list of nominations on the Parish notice board and nominations will be announced by the Parish Priests 1 week prior to the Election Date.

CONDITIONS FOR NOMINATION FOR PARISH COUNCIL

In accordance with Rule 3(7) of the Constitution, any member of the Parish who wishes to be elected to the Parish Council must satisfy the following conditions on appointment and throughout the term:

- A Coptic Orthodox Christian over eighteen (18) years old;
- Adheres to the Coptic Orthodox Church faith, doctrine and practices;
- A regular attendee of the Parish services; and
- An active participant in the sacraments of the Church, including confession and the sacrament of the Eucharist.
- Has served only one term (3 years) on the Parish Council in the last 6 years or has not served on Parish Council for at least 3 years.

As this is the first Parish Council election, anyone currently serving on the Board of Deacons or a parish council will be deemed to have served one term (regardless of their actual length of service) and may be elected to Parish Council for one further term.

- Is not currently serving on another Parish Council
- Is not prevented from serving under Rule 3(34)(E) or(G) or Rule 3(35)(A) or (B)

STRUCTURE OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

In accordance with Rule 3(2) of the Constitution, the Parish Council will consist of the following:

- Chairperson – the most senior Parish Priest or another Parish Priests nominated by him
- All Parish Priests (ex officio)
- Parish Sunday School Superintendent (ex officio)
- Parish Youth Representative (ex officio)
- 7 Parish Councillors elected by the Parish (if the Parish has 3 Parish Priests or less); OR
- 9 Parish Councillors elected by the Parish (if the Parish has more than 3 Parish Priests)

The role of Secretary and Treasurer will be selected from the elected Parish Councillors by a vote at the first Parish Council meeting.

PROCEDURE FOR VOTER REGISTRATION

1. Parish members may only vote in the Parish Council elections provided the Parish member has registered to vote by completing the Registration Form.
2. The Registration Forms will be available on the Diocese website and Diocese Facebook group for download. Hard copy Registration Forms will be available at the Parish.
3. The Registration Form can be submitted either in hard copy or online (via email) to the Parish's Election Representative, to be included in the voting register.
4. It is strongly recommended that all Parish members register to vote prior to the Parish Council Election Date. If however, a member of the Parish has not registered to vote, they may complete a Registration Form on the Election Date provided it is approved by a Parish Priest.
5. The Election Representative is responsible for preparing and maintaining the voting register from the current date until the Parish Council Election Date.
6. On the Parish Council Election Date, the Election Representative must produce and provide to the election monitors a complete list of all registered voters for the Parish.

PROCEDURE FOR COUNCIL ELECTIONS

7. All Parish Council elections MUST take place on the Election Date, unless Rule 3(10) of the Constitution applies.
8. Each Parish Council election must be supervised by at least 2 election monitors who will be chosen by the Parish Priests. The election monitors will monitor the election of a Parish which is not their own Parish.
9. Parish members may only vote in the Parish Council elections provided the Parish member:
 - a. Has registered to vote by completing the Registration Form; and
 - b. Attends the Parish in person on the Election Date; and
 - c. Has not voted in any other Parish Council elections.
10. Voting will take place via a written ballot which must be completed on the Election Date at the Parish.
11. On the Election Date, each Parish member must:
 - a. Register their attendance by checking their name against the register of voters. Each Parish member may be asked to show a form of identification to prove their identity;
 - b. Complete an Election Form; and
 - c. Place the Election Form in the ballot box.
12. At the conclusion of the Election, the election monitors will:
 - a. Ensure that all Election Forms have been placed in the ballot box;
 - b. Meet together in a closed office or meeting room within the Parish;
 - c. Ensure that at least 2 election monitors are in attendance at all times through the counting of the votes.
 - d. The votes must be counted at least twice and each vote count must be conducted by 1 or 2 election monitors and separately checked by another election monitor.
 - e. The election monitors must all agree on the Election outcome before any announcement is made.
 - f. The election monitors must complete a statement of results (the form of which will be provided to the election monitors by the election committee) and sign and submit the statement to the election committee along with all completed voting ballots and any other documents requested by the election committee.
13. 2 members of the Parish, chosen by the Parish Priests may also attend and observe the counting of the votes however, they must not participate or interfere in the vote count in any way.

14. Once the outcome of the Parish Council election is determined, and not later than 48 hours after the conclusion of the Election Date, the election committee must notify the successful candidates of their election to the Parish Council by electronic mail. The outcome of the Parish Council election must be communicated to the Parish by the Parish Priests by announcement no later than 1 week after the Election Date. The results will also be published on the Parish noticeboard and any other communication channel which the Parish Priests determine is reasonable and necessary for effective communication.
15. No later than 2 weeks after the Parish Council election results have been announced, the new Parish Council must meet to vote for the Secretary and Treasurer of the Parish Council (**First Parish Council Meeting**).
16. The Chairperson of the Parish Council is responsible for arranging the First Parish Council meeting including giving not less 7 days written notice of the date and time of the meeting. Notice of meeting must be provided by electronic mail.
17. At least 3 days prior to the First Parish Council Meeting, any Parish Councillor who would like to be elected to the role of Secretary or Treasurer should give notice of their nomination by way of electronic mail to the Chairperson.
18. All members of the Parish Council must be present at the First Parish Council Meeting to elect the Secretary and Treasurer. Attendance can be either in person or via video call.
19. The vote of the Secretary and Treasurer can each be conducted by a show of hands from the Parish Council.
20. Communication of the final Parish Council roles and responsibilities will be effected as per item 8 above.