

ANSWERS to questions

of which notice has been given

Q1 Communicant Members

Submitted by: The Rev'd Sally Phelps

The definition of communicant member is set out in Cl 103 of the Administration Ordinance. In brief, it means someone who has been baptised and confirmed according to the rights of the Anglican Church, is over 18, and has received communion at least three times in the previous twelve months.

In each of clauses 6.10 and 7.1 of the Parish Ordinance, the test for whether someone can **do** certain things is slightly different.

So, to be able to take part in a parish meeting or be counted in a parish meeting quorum or vote requires you to be a communicant member **and have attended services during three months within the past twelve months**. And to be able to hold a parish office you **must be a communicant member and have regularly attended services in that parish for at least six months**.

There would be merit in the Ordinance Review Panel being led by Bob Cameron to review this and make some recommendations to Bishop-in-Council to be really clear about these matters across both Ordinances.

Q2 Clergy Retirement

Submitted by: The Rev'd Bob Cameron

The session of the Synod which met on 18 September 2021 (Part A) was adjourned and scheduled to resume on 5 February 2022 (Part B). However, as recorded in the minutes of the second session of the same Synod, held on 17 September 2022, the Synod noted "that Part B of the first session of the 50th Synod, due to be held on 5th February 2022, was cancelled by Bishop-in-Council due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time, and that the matters scheduled to be considered then were subsequently dealt with by Bishop-in-Council as noted in its report to this Synod."

Bishop-in-Council in due course referred the request to the Ordinance Review Panel. Due to a change of chairmanship of the panel, however, the matter fell into abeyance, in part at least because the new chair was unaware that it had been so referred. As things should happen, the current chair of the panel is also the person who brought the original motion to the Synod in 2021 and will bring the motion to us again in this session.

Q3 APT building maintenance

Submitted by: Mr Doug Milton

While Bathurst APT is the legal owner of all Diocesan property, it holds the property for the benefit of the beneficiary of the trust, which in each case will be the relevant parish. So, there is a sense in which we all own the property together, but the APT is the guardian or protector of the property in order to ensure the property is retained and used in accord with the trust.

Unless there is an insurance claim, repairs and maintenance are the responsibility of the beneficiary of the trust, so the analogy mentioned in the question does not apply.

While the APT has a vested interest in buildings being properly maintained it does not have capacity to monitor the state of buildings, nor to undertake necessary maintenance. Hence it is critically important that buildings be regularly inspected by Churchwardens and maintenance performed in a timely manner. Parishes could consider putting some money aside each year into a maintenance fund which may then be drawn upon as need arises.

Q4 Future strategy for building usability

Submitted by: Mr Doug Milton

There is no present strategy 'to keep these buildings usable', other than to encourage parishes to undertake regular inspection and keep up with maintenance. Unless the parish can fund structural work (incl through its own fundraising and e.g. government or private grants) then the future of the building may be in doubt. The APT holds no funds for repairs or maintenance.

The questioner could try a motion along the lines of "synod respectfully requests APT to investigate the merits of a strategy 'to keep our buildings usable' " or similar wording, to help move forward to the desired outcome reflected in the question.