

Membership and Terms of Office for the Pastoral Leadership Team (PLT)

Background and Introduction

Inspired by Pope Francis' Synod on Synodality, every parish is encouraged to establish a Pastoral Council. The St Joseph's council, known as the Pastoral Leadership Team (PLT), collaborates with the parish priest and Carmelite Community to focus on pastoral care and missionary outreach, while administrative, building, and financial matters fall under separate groups. The PLT represents diverse perspectives from the parish, aiming to listen, discern and act according to the Holy Spirit.

Key Characteristics and Practice

The PLT prioritises prayer and discernment, seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. Meetings start with an Opening Prayer (Lectio Divina) and use "Conversation in the Spirit" (CIS) for important topics (see link to a video for an introduction to CIS – [Introducing Conversations in the Spirit](#)). Sessions close with a brief Examen.

Guidance for PLT practices come from the School for Synodality's resources such as their Pastoral Council Starter Kit "Reimagining Pastoral Councils" (for more information see these short YouTube videos for [Reimagining Pastoral Councils Part One](#) and [Reimagining Pastoral Councils Part Two](#)).

The PLT participates in Northampton Diocese's 2025/26 Accompaniment Programme. Core values include being rooted in prayer, mission focused, reading the signs of the times, transparent and accountable.

Membership Criteria and Selection Process

- The PLT consists of 12 members: two Co-Chairs (Parish Priest and a lay parishioner), a Carmelite Friar, Lay Secretary, Lay Prayer Lead, and seven other lay parishioner members.
- The parish's Pastoral Coordinator acts as an advisor and support on projects.
- Additional attendees can be invited for specialist advice.
- Seven members form a quorum.
- Members should demonstrate faith, spiritual growth, active parish involvement, confidentiality, listening skills, commitment to the Church's mission, discernment, teamwork and leadership, and must agree to serve the designated term.

- Initial selection was led by the Parish Priest and Carmelite Community, and future selections will follow a similar consultative process.

Terms of Office

- Regular members serve three-year terms, with a maximum of two consecutive terms before a required three-year break.
- Ideally, no changes are made to a newly formed PLT for two years; after that, one-third of members are replaced every cycle to ensure continuity and fresh perspectives.
- Lay chairperson, secretary and prayer lead also serve three-year terms, renewable once.

Future Considerations

Succession planning is critical and requires ongoing engagement. A strong PLT creates vision and inspires new leaders, ensuring the continued vitality and inclusivity of the parish community.