

Bill No.2

Proposer: The Revd Canon Malcolm Kingston

Embargo Until Delivery • Check Against Delivery

Bishop,

Chapter 3 Part I of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland requires that public notices be affixed to the principal door of a parish's church, chapel or church hall in order to publicise two annual meetings; that for the revision of the Register of General Vestry Membership, as well as for the meeting of the General or Easter Vestry. As well as being publicised by the notices affixed to doors, both meetings should be announced during services on two Sundays prior to the meetings.

Presumably, the intention behind the notices on doors was 'to widen the net' and create an added opportunity to inform people who may wish to become registered for membership of the General Vestry, and/or to attend the General or Easter Vestry, but were not in church on the Sundays when the announcements were made.

Bill No. 2 retains the necessity for announcements of both meetings during two Sundays previous. It also specifies that the meetings should be 'widely communicated' to benefit those who are absent when announcements are made.

It is fully recognised that the term 'widely communicated' is a subjective term and how a Parish might deem to satisfy this requirement may differ from place to place. However, in today's context there are so many methods of communication. Many parishes have parish notice boards, parish magazines, parish social media accounts, email circulars, websites and many dioceses have magazines to which parishes include their notes. With what we have available to us today, it is arguably that we have many greater opportunities for information to be shared than a notice on a door. Parishes should be encouraged to utilise whatever organs of communication that they have at their disposal to offer notice of both meetings.

Naturally, parishes who wish to maintain the tradition of communicating by signs on the doors are very much welcome to do so. But many parishes, I believe, would prefer to use alternative means that don't involve pinholes on church doors!

I propose that Bill No. 2 be given a Second Reading.