



Waikato Taranaki Anglicans

Diocesan Guide to Running Parish AGMs

A plain-language reference guide for vicars, churchwardens, vestry members, and parish administrators.

How to use this guide

This guide covers everything you need to plan, run, and complete a parish AGM in the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki. It is organised in the order things happen — before, during, and after the meeting — so you can use it as a planning companion through the year.

All requirements are drawn from [Statute 15 \(Parishes Statute 2009, amended 2022\)](#). Where something is a legal requirement, it is clearly marked. Everything else is good practice guidance.

Questions? Contact the Diocesan Office: admin@wtanglican.nz | 07 857 0020

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Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki | 2026 Edition

1. What is a Parish AGM?

Every parish in the Diocese is required to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year. The AGM is the primary formal meeting of the parish — the moment when the congregation comes together to review the past year, receive the accounts, and elect the people who will lead and serve through the year ahead.

It is not simply an administrative requirement. The AGM is the moment when your parish constitutes itself: when the vestry is formed, officers are appointed, and the community affirms its commitment to shared governance. Done well, it strengthens the parish. Done poorly — or not at all — it creates real legal and governance risk.

The legal framework

Parish AGMs in the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki are governed by [Statute 15 \(Parishes Statute 2009, amended 2022\)](#). This statute sets out who must be present, what must be on the agenda, how elections must be conducted, and what must happen after the meeting. This guide is written in plain language, but the statute is the authoritative source.

Key statutory deadlines at a glance

AGM deadline	30 April each year
Extension available?	Yes — up to 31 May, with Standing Committee approval
Notice required	Minimum two weeks, published in the weekly newsletter
Schedule D (Declarations)	Forward to Diocesan Office without delay after the AGM
Annual Statistics form	Due within two weeks of the AGM

2. Before the Meeting

2.1 Scheduling the AGM

The AGM must be held by 30 April. If this is genuinely not possible, the Standing Committee can grant an extension to 31 May — contact the Diocesan Office to arrange this.

The most important scheduling consideration is the availability of the End of Year financial accounts. Parish accounts are prepared by the diocesan accounting firm on a calendar year basis (1 January – 31 December). Reports are typically ready before the end of March, but this varies. Before you set your AGM date, confirm with the accounting firm when the accounts will be available. Do not set a date you cannot keep.

Important: The accounts must be presented at the AGM. If they are not ready, you cannot hold the AGM. Confirm availability before advertising a date.

2.2 Reviewing the parish roll

The parish roll determines who is eligible to vote at the AGM. Under the model bylaw in [Statute 15](#), a person is entitled to vote if they are validly baptised, have been registered on the parish roll for not less than two months before the meeting, and have made the Declaration — or are known by the vicar and churchwardens to be qualified to make it¹.

The model bylaw applies to all parishes by default. However, those parts of the bylaw indicated in italics may be altered by a parish at a general meeting. This means the two-month period, in particular, may differ in parishes that have adopted their own bylaw. **Churchwardens should check their parish bylaw to confirm the applicable requirements.**

Churchwardens should review the roll before the AGM to ensure it is current. This matters for two reasons: first, the quorum is calculated from the roll (ten roll members must be present); second, it avoids on-the-day disputes about who can vote.

2.3 Planning for elections

The vestry is the governing body of the parish. The AGM elects vestry members and a range of officers. Recruitment is often the hardest part of the AGM process, particularly in smaller or aging congregations. The time to begin conversations with potential candidates is weeks before the meeting — not at it.

Officers elected at the AGM

The following are elected at the AGM prior to the first session of each Synod (every second year):

- People's Warden (elected by the congregation)
- Two Lay Synod Representatives
- Vestry members (not fewer than three, not more than six elected lay members)
- Parish Nominators

Note: Secretary to Vestry and Treasurer are not elected at the AGM. They are appointed by the vestry at its first meeting after the AGM (Statute 15, Clause on Meetings of Vestries).

¹ See the Electors clause in the Fourth Schedule: Bylaws of the [Parishes Statute](#).

Form of Declaration:

I hereby declare that I have been baptised, and am a member of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

The Vicar's Churchwarden

The Vicar's Churchwarden is not elected by the congregation — they are appointed by the vicar, or in the absence of a vicar, by the Bishop. Statute 15 contains two relevant clauses that should be read together:

- Clause 10 provides that the Vicar's Churchwarden is appointed at the AGM prior to the first session of each Synod — that is, every second year, in the same cycle as vestry and Synod Representative elections.
- Clause 20 requires the announcement of the Vicar's Churchwarden as a standing item on the agenda of every AGM.

The Diocese reads these clauses as follows: the formal appointment is made at the Synod-cycle AGM (every second year). In the intervening years, the agenda item serves as an announcement confirming that the existing Churchwarden continues in the role. The appointment and the announcement are different acts.

In both cases — whether it is an appointment year or a confirmation year — the vicar should speak with the person before the meeting to confirm they are willing and available to continue or take up the role. The formal act happens at the AGM, but it should never come as a surprise to the person being appointed.

If there is any uncertainty about whether a new appointment is required in a given year, contact the Diocesan Office.

Vestry elections and numbers

Vestry members are not elected every year. Elections are held at the AGM prior to the first session of each Synod — that is, every second year. Between elections, the existing vestry continues in office.

The number of vestry members is set in the parish bylaw (not fewer than three nor more than six elected lay members). If the vestry wishes to change this number, a resolution at the AGM is required. The AGM must formally review vestry numbers each year — this is a statutory agenda item even if no change is proposed.

If it is genuinely not possible to fill all vestry positions, the vestry may co-opt up to three additional members after the AGM. Co-opted members cannot exceed one-third of the total vestry. The Treasurer may also be co-opted.

Parish Nominators and Synod Representatives

Both Parish Nominators and Lay Synod Representatives are elected at the AGM prior to the first session of each Synod — every second year, in the same year as vestry elections. Check your parish cycle before preparing the agenda. Including these items in the wrong year wastes time; missing them in the right year creates a compliance problem.

To determine whether the current year is a Synod election year, check with the Diocesan Office or refer to the Synod schedule on the Diocesan website. When in doubt, ask — missing a required election is a compliance issue that cannot be easily remedied after the fact.

Secret ballot requirement

All officer elections at the AGM must be conducted by secret ballot. This is a statutory requirement — show of hands or voice votes are not permitted for elections. You will need ballot papers and a container for collection, and a scrutineer to count the votes away from the meeting.

Prepare ballot papers before the meeting. Do not improvise on the day.

2.4 Preparing documents

The following documents should be prepared or confirmed before the AGM:

- ☐ End of Year financial accounts — confirmed as received from the accounting firm
- ☐ Previous AGM minutes — and any Special General Meeting (SGM) minutes since the last AGM
- ☐ Churchwardens' report
- ☐ Agenda — see the sample in Section 3
- ☐ Notice for the weekly newsletter — to be published at least two weeks before the meeting
- ☐ Schedule D (Declarations form) — to be signed by all elected officers at the meeting. Download from the Diocesan website or request from the Diocesan Office.
- ☐ Ballot papers — one per contested position, or a combined ballot if multiple positions are being filled simultaneously
- ☐ Scrutineer confirmed

2.5 Notice

The AGM must be advertised in the parish weekly newsletter at least two weeks before the date. Some parish bylaws require longer notice — check your bylaw. The notice should include the date, time, and location of the meeting.

If your parish does not have a weekly newsletter, the notice must be given in whatever regular communication channel is used — the principle is that all roll members have a reasonable opportunity to be informed.

3. The Meeting

3.1 Quorum

The meeting cannot proceed without a quorum. The quorum for an AGM is:

10 parishioners on the roll must be present, plus **the vicar or at least one churchwarden**.

If either of these conditions is not met, the meeting is not quorate and cannot proceed. The chair must announce the meeting is not quorate and adjourn to a new date. This does not require a vote — it is a factual determination.

The vicar or churchwarden should be confirmed as available well before the meeting. Roll numbers should be checked in advance. If there is any risk of not reaching quorum, address it before the day.

3.2 The agenda

The statute sets out a minimum agenda. The AGM is not valid unless all of these items are addressed. Additional items can be added, but none of the minimum items can be omitted.

#	Agenda item	Notes
1	Opening prayer	<i>Required by statute</i>
2	Apologies	<i>Record all apologies in the minutes</i>
3	Confirmation of previous minutes	<i>AGM minutes and any SGM minutes since last AGM. Mover and seconder required.</i>
4	Consideration of the duly reviewed accounts	<i>See Section 3.3 for explanation of 'duly reviewed'</i>
5	Review of vestry member numbers	<i>Formal resolution required if changing. Even if no change, must be reviewed.</i>
6	Announcement of the Vicar's Churchwarden	<i>Appointment year (Synod cycle): vicar formally appoints. Other years: vicar announces continuing Churchwarden. Vicar should confirm with the person before the meeting in either case.</i>
7	Election of officers	<i>By secret ballot. See Section 3.4.</i>
8	General business	<i>Parish-specific items. Not a forum for relitigating decisions.</i>
9	Closing prayer	

3.3 The accounts: what 'duly reviewed' means

The statute requires the AGM to consider the 'duly reviewed accounts'. This does not mean a special pre-AGM audit — it means the accounts have been subject to proper vestry oversight.

Two things should have happened before the accounts are presented at the AGM:

- Financial reports should have been received, considered, and minuted at vestry meetings throughout the year as part of normal governance.

- The End of Year accounts should have been reviewed and accepted by vestry at a vestry meeting before the AGM. The congregation should not be seeing them for the first time at the AGM.

Parish accounts are prepared by the diocesan accounting firm on a calendar-year basis. The Diocese has a consolidated audit arrangement.

Practical note: The End of Year accounts are prepared on a calendar year (1 Jan – 31 Dec). Confirm with the accounting firm when they will be available before setting your AGM date. Do not schedule a date you may not be able to keep.

3.4 Conducting elections

All elections at the AGM must be conducted by secret ballot. The chair should:

- Announce each contested position and invite nominations from the floor if no candidates have been identified in advance
- Distribute ballot papers
- Allow time for voting
- Collect completed papers (a box or bag works well)
- Retire with the scrutineer to count the votes out of sight of the meeting
- Return and announce the results

A secret ballot is only required when voting is actually triggered — that is, when the number of nominees exceeds the number of vacancies. Where the number of nominees equals or is fewer than the number of vacancies, all nominees are considered elected unopposed and no ballot is required. The chair simply declares them elected.

If a position cannot be filled on the day, it may be left vacant and filled by vestry co-option after the meeting (up to three co-opted members total, not exceeding one-third of vestry).

3.5 Chairing the meeting

The AGM is normally chaired by the vicar. The vicar may delegate the chair to another member of the vestry — but this is a delegation by the vicar, not an election by the meeting. The statute does not provide for the meeting to elect its own chair.

Where the position of vicar is vacant, the archdeacon acts as priest in charge and should chair the AGM, unless they delegate that role to another member of the vestry. If you are in an interregnum and uncertain about chairing arrangements, contact the Diocesan Office or your archdeacon in advance of the meeting.

A few principles that help:

- Open and close with prayer — this is a requirement and sets the right tone
- State the quorum at the beginning of the meeting so everyone is clear the meeting is valid
- The chair's ruling on procedural questions is final, subject to the meeting's right to appeal by resolution
- General business is not a forum for relitigating the year's decisions — the chair can and should redirect off-agenda discussion
- If the meeting becomes heated, a short break is a legitimate tool — it gives people time to compose themselves
- Subcommittees cease to exist at the AGM. They must be formally re-established if needed. Do not assume they continue automatically.

3.6 Minutes

The secretary to vestry (or another person nominated by the chair) should minute the AGM. Minutes should record:

- Date, time, and location
- Those present and apologies received
- Confirmation that quorum was present
- All resolutions passed (mover, seconder, and result)
- Election results
- Any business discussed under general business

Minutes do not need to be a verbatim transcript. They are a record of decisions made and business conducted.

4. After the Meeting

Three things must happen after every AGM. All three are commonly overlooked or delayed. They are not optional.

4.1 Schedule D — Declarations

Timing: forward to the Diocesan Office without delay after the AGM

Under Part C15 of the [Constitution of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia](#), every churchwarden, elected vestry member, and Synod Representative is required to sign a Declaration of Adherence when taking office.

Schedule D is the form that captures this declaration. It must be completed at the AGM — officers sign it as part of taking up their role — and forwarded to the Diocesan Office without delay.

The declaration is a commitment to uphold the [Constitution and Code of Canons](#) of the Anglican Church, and to resign from office if required to do so under those instruments. It is a constitutional requirement, not a formality.

Schedule D requires the following information for each officer:

- Full name
- Physical address
- Email address
- Contact number
- Signature

Officers listed on Schedule D include: Vicar's Warden (or Bishop's Warden), People's Warden, Synod Representatives, Youth Synod Representative, Parish Nominators, and all elected Vestry Members.

Because the Secretary to Vestry and Treasurer are appointed at the first vestry meeting after the AGM rather than elected at the AGM itself, they may not be known at the time of the AGM. Where they are known, they should sign Schedule D at the AGM along with the other officers. Where they are not yet appointed, they should sign Schedule D at the first vestry meeting after their appointment.

[Download Schedule D and all other schedules from the Parish Administration page](#). Bring a printed copy of Schedule D to every AGM.

4.2 Annual Parish Statistics (Schedules A, B, and C)

Timing: within two weeks of the AGM

The Annual Parish Statistics form must be completed and returned to the Diocesan Office within two weeks of the AGM. It is the joint responsibility of the vicar/priest-in-charge and the churchwardens to ensure this is done.

The form is a single document containing three schedules:

- Schedule A — Parish information update (A.1) and role holder statistics covering all licence holders, paid staff, and volunteers (A.2)
- Schedule B — Attendance records: worship locations, church attendance, sacramental statistics (baptisms, confirmations, marriages, funerals), and ministry programmes

- Schedule C — Property, health and safety: building compliance, Building Warrants of Fitness, fire safety, and health and safety checks

This information is used by the Diocese to plan ministry and education, and forms part of the annual report filed with Charities Services. It is important that it is accurate.

All schedules, including the Annual Parish Statistics form, are available on the [Parish Administration page](#).

4.3 First vestry meeting

The first vestry meeting after the AGM should be held as soon as practicable. The statute requires that at this meeting the vestry appoints a Treasurer and a Secretary. At this meeting, the vestry should:

- Appoint the Treasurer — this is a statutory requirement at the first vestry meeting (the Treasurer may be co-opted if no suitable person was available at the AGM)
- Appoint the Secretary to Vestry — also a statutory requirement at the first vestry meeting
- Re-establish any subcommittees that were dissolved at the AGM
- Confirm any delegations or authorities

All vestry subcommittees automatically cease to exist before each AGM. They do not continue unless formally re-established by vestry resolution after the AGM.

5. Master Preparation Checklist

Use this checklist each year. Tick items off as they are completed.

8–10 weeks before

- ☐ Confirm EOFY accounts will be available in time — contact the accounting firm
- ☐ Set and confirm the AGM date (must be by 30 April)
- ☐ Check your parish bylaw for any specific notice or procedural requirements

6–8 weeks before

- ☐ Review the parish roll — confirm it is current
- ☐ Identify all officer positions to be filled
- ☐ Begin conversations with potential vestry candidates — don't leave this until the week before
- ☐ Confirm the vicar or a churchwarden will be present
- ☐ Vicar to speak with the Vicar's Churchwarden before the AGM — in Synod election years this is a formal appointment; in other years it confirms the person is continuing. In both cases the announcement is made at the meeting.
- ☐ Check whether this is a Synod election year — if so, vestry members, Lay Synod Representatives, and Parish Nominators must all be elected at this AGM. Confirm with the Diocesan Office if unsure.

2–4 weeks before

- ☐ Confirm End of Year accounts received
- ☐ Prepare agenda (include all statutory items)
- ☐ Prepare notice for the weekly newsletter
- ☐ Prepare churchwardens' report
- ☐ Download and print Schedule D (Declarations form)
- ☐ Prepare ballot papers for all elections
- ☐ Confirm scrutineer

At least 2 weeks before

- ☐ Publish notice in the weekly newsletter

On the day

- ☐ Bring: agenda, previous minutes, accounts, churchwardens' report, Schedule D, ballot papers, container for ballots
- ☐ Confirm quorum before opening the meeting
- ☐ Conduct all elections by secret ballot
- ☐ Ensure all elected officers sign Schedule D before leaving

Within 2 weeks after

- ☐ Forward completed Schedule D to Diocesan Office
- ☐ Complete and submit Annual Parish Statistics form (Schedules A, B, and C)
- ☐ Finalise and distribute AGM minutes
- ☐ Hold first vestry meeting — re-establish subcommittees, confirm appointments

6. Key Contacts and Resources

Diocesan Office

Phone: 07 857 0020

Email: admin@wtanglican.nz

Website: www.wtanglican.nz

Diocesan Manager: Ben Ferreira | manager@wtanglican.nz

Documents available on the Diocesan website

- [Statute 15 \(Parishes Statute 2009, amended 2022\)](#)
- [Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia](#)
- Schedule D — Declaration of Adherence and Submission
- Annual Parish Statistics form (Schedules A, B, and C)
- Guide for Vestries and Wardens (current edition, available on the Diocesan website)
- This guide — Diocesan Guide to Running Parish AGMs

A note on the relationship between AGM requirements

Several post-AGM obligations flow together. Completing the Schedules and submitting the Statistics form are not separate bureaucratic exercises — they are part of how the Diocese maintains accurate records of who holds office, who is ministering, and how parishes are functioning. The information directly supports diocesan planning, bishop's visits, and the annual Charities Services filing.

If you have questions about any aspect of your AGM — before, during, or after — the Diocesan Office is here to help. Please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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