

## Membership of Parish Council

### Proposed by Christchurch Presbytery

#### Recommendation

---

That the Book of Order Chapter 7 be amended to allow the membership of a Parish Council form of governance to include up to 40 percent of non-ordained members.

---

---

---

#### Proposal

---

1 The proposal is that Book of Order Chapter 7 be amended to allow the membership of a parish council form of governance to include up to 40 percent of non ordained members.

2 The reason for the proposal is that the Book of Order regulations appear to preclude the appointment of church members who are not elders as members of a parish council.

Section 7.4 (3) states: *“Despite subsection (2) a congregation may, with the approval of its presbytery, organise its church council in any other way that the members and associate members consider appropriate for their circumstances.”* The Presbytery of Christchurch has approved requests from two congregations with a parish council form of governance to modify their council membership to include members who were not elders. The presbytery gave this approval on the understanding that clause 7.4 (3) gave it the right to do so. However, the presbytery was later advised that Book of Order clause 7.11 (1) (Parish Council) states: *“Sections 7 and 10 [of this chapter] apply to the membership of a parish council that combines the functions of the Session and either the Board of Managers or Deacons’ Court.”* This means that the membership provisions for a session also apply to a parish council.

3 The Presbytery of Christchurch understands that the membership of many parish councils is comprised of Work Group or Committee Conveners. Whilst many church members are willing and suitable to undertake a convenership, for a variety of reasons, they do not always wish to become elders. This presbytery believes there is a place for such members to serve on a parish council.