



# DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

Newsletter – July 2023

## [Abstract](#)

Who are the DPC, what do we do, and what are we planning for the coming year?

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## WHAT IS THE DPC?

The Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) facilitates pastoral reflection and collaborative leadership across the Diocese of Killaloe. The Council represents a model of Church based on a partnership between priests and people. Members are drawn from the laity and clergy from Parishes throughout the Diocese and are appointed by Bishop Fintan. To respond to the challenges facing the Church in contemporary society, the Diocesan Pastoral Council works closely with the Bishop to: - stimulate thinking. facilitate collaboration. encourage dialogue. engage in discernment. enable decision-making. formulate, promote, and implement practical pastoral initiatives.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE DPC

The Council, in accordance with the Code of Canon Law, will consist of ex officio members: - The Bishop Representative(s) from the Council of Priests Representative(s) from Pastoral Development Team Representative(s) from the Youth Ministry Team and appointed members: - Parishioners from Killaloe Diocese as nominated through Bishop Fintan. Membership is time limited to three years with a rolling replacement for non-ex officio members. No appointed members may serve on the council for more than two consecutive terms. If a member of the Council leaves before the expiry of his / her membership term, the Bishop may appoint a replacement.

## WHO ARE THE DPC?

- Bishop Fintan Monahan
- Don O'Sullivan (chair)
- Denis Bates, Tradaree Pastoral Area
- Riona Browne, Imeall Bóirne Pastoral Area
- Fr. Michael Collins, Tradaree Pastoral Area
- Maureen Kelly, Pastoral Development
- Fr. Albert McDonnell, Diocesan Chancellor
- Vonnie Dalton, Brendan Pastoral Area

## THE WORK OF THE DPC (2022/2023)

In the past year, the council has worked on several Diocesan initiatives and has engaged widely across the Diocese in the delivery of: -

- The Diocesan Synodal Synthesis
- Conversations across the Diocese
- Parish Pastoral Council Report

### *THE DIOCESAN SYNODAL SYNTHESIS*

As part of the Synod on Synodality, led by Pope Francis, a significant process of outreach took place through late 2021 and into 2022. This aimed to develop a Synthesis (report) from each Diocese on the specific topics of Communion, Mission, and Participation.

Over 500 pages of data were submitted from Pastoral Area and Parish Groups and from individual respondents. A team made up of members from the DPC and others<sup>1</sup> (invited by Bishop Fintan), was formed and set about reading, praying, and discerning together over many online and in-person meetings to identify the themes emerging from the material gathered. In this work, we were guided by reflective questions from both the National Steering Group and the General Secretariat of the Synod in Rome. The topics that emerged in Killaloe, similar to those that appeared across many reports that formed the Irish Synthesis, were: -

Broken Trust  
Address Exclusion of Women  
(Empowerment)  
Groups Who Are Marginalised  
Church Language

Re-energise Outreach to Young People  
Welcome & Inclusion/Opportunities to  
Participate  
Connecting and Re-Connecting with Faith  
New Possibilities versus Stay Where We Are

A full copy of the final report, which was submitted to the National Steering Group, is available on the Killaloe Diocese website.

<sup>1</sup> Alice Kennedy, Bernadette Daniels, Gerard Lynch, Fr. Pat Malone, Liz Murray, Dolores Madden, Tom O’Dea

## *CONVERSATIONS ACROSS THE DIOCESE*

Bishop Fintan and Maureen Kelly, along with members of the DPC, met with members of all Pastoral Areas in a series of meetings that were scheduled in early 2023. Those in attendance heard from Fr. Albert McDonnell and Fr. Ger Godley (Kerry) on different approaches to the current structural challenges facing Killaloe Diocese at this time. Group discussions were facilitated at each of the meetings, and notes were kept of each gathering, culminating in a review (similar in approach to the Synthesis discussed earlier) by the DPC of the topics arising and what members of the Killaloe faith community are most concerned about. The themes arising from these conversations included: -

Youth Engagement	Administration
Teamwork	Future Parish/Pastoral Area Approach
Communication	Change
Pastoral Areas	Parish Identity
Training	New Ministries

Bishop Fintan is preparing a Pastoral Letter presently to outline the approach to Parish/Pastoral Areas for the coming years.

## *PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL REPORT*

Maureen Kelly led a significant body of work to get a deep understanding of each Parish Pastoral Council across the Diocese. A questionnaire was sent to all PPCs to determine: -

- Membership of the Parish Pastoral Council (numbers, age profile, and gender).
- Role holders in the PPC and the tenure of the Chairperson.
- Challenges faced by PPCs in attracting membership.
- Meetings of the PPC, their regularity and procedures (e.g., recording of minutes, agenda-setting etc.)
- The Spirituality of the PPC (the place of prayer and listening to God's Word in the life of the PPC).
- The span of the issues worked on by the PPC.
- Issues that take up most time at meetings.
- The challenges now facing the parishes and PPCs.
- What kind of group is the PPC: it is a decision-making, consultative or advisory group?
- How does the PPC communicate with the wider parish community?
- Links between the PPC and the Pastoral Area and the Diocese
- Training requested by PPCs.

A total of 56 responses were received and a detailed report was developed showing results of the topics that formed the questionnaire. Denis Bates and Jean Gaynor

worked closely with Maureen in developing a presentation for each Parish and the overall final report (PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS IN THE DIOCESE OF KILLALOE - A Study based on a Survey conducted by the Pastoral Development Office in conjunction with the Diocesan Pastoral Council).

It is anticipated that the report, and individual Parish presentations, will be delivered across the Diocese in late 2023.

### **THE YEAR AHEAD – TOP 5 PRIORITIES (2023/2024)**

- ✦ Actions arising and further discussion relating to the Parish Pastoral Council Report
  - How best to share the information?
  - What issues need addressing at the local/Diocesan level?
  - Engage with parishes through 2023/2024 in a collaborative manner to pose questions and keep conversations going (links into the Communications priority)
  - Update required for current Pastoral Council Guidelines?
  - No “one size” response will fit all issues arising in the report.
  
- ✦ Communications
  - Set up a group that can ensure information is shared in all directions across the Diocese.
  
- ✦ Training
  - Moving from What to Why.
  - Different types of training are required (Admin, formation, catechesis, adult formation, youth engagement, etc.).
  - Bring back the “Night of Nourishment” programme for readers and eucharistic ministers.
  
- ✦ The Irish Synodal Process
  
- ✦ Engaging with young people
  - Bring different groups together across the Diocese to form one central Youth Team
  - Define a “Journey after Confirmation” to retain those that are presently leaving us at this stage.
    - John Paul II Awards
    - World Youth Day
    - Taizé
    - Etc.