MARK
Bishop of Shrewsbury

DECREE APPROVING AND PROMULGATING
STATUTES FOR THE COUNCIL OF PRIESTS
OF THE DIOCESE OF SHREWSBURY

Whereas the constitution set out in the annex to this decree has been proposed (and subsequently examined by interested parties) as the document governing the processes and procedures for my diocesan council of priests subject and in accordance with cc495-501 of the Code of Canon Law 1983;

and whereas necessary information has been sought and those who may be affected have in so far as possible been heard and their views appropriately accommodated;

and whereas the said constitution appears to me to be suitable for the purpose

NOW I, MARK, BISHOP OF SHREWSBURY hereby APPROVE the said constitution and so promulgate it as the statutes of the said council under c496 of the said code, subject as aforesaid;

and I DIRECT that the full text of this decree and its annex be published on the website of the Diocese of Shrewsbury (http://www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/).

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at my diocesan curial offices under my hand and curial seal this thirty-first day of October 2014

The Rt Rev Mark Davies
Bishop of Shrewsbury

Philip White
The Rev Philip White
Deacon
Chancellor

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SHREWSBURY DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF PRIESTS:

CONSTITUTION

(In accordance with Canon 495)

1. The Council of Priests is called the SHREWSBURY DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF PRIESTS. It is established by the Bishop of the Diocese in accordance with Canon 495.

2. The Council is primarily a consultative body which shares the Bishop’s responsibility for the Diocese. The Council assists the Bishop with its advice in matters pertaining to the pastoral welfare and governing of the Diocese.

   (Canon 495.1)

3. The Bishop is required by the Code of Canon Law to consult the Council in matters of serious moment, and in the other matters listed in the Appendix to this Constitution.

   (Canon 500.2)

4. The Council is designated for a term of three years.

   (Cf Canon 501)

5. Following the norms of Canon Law, the Council is constituted by ex officio, elected and appointed members, as follows:

   A) EX OFFICIO
      - The Vicars General
      - The Bishop’s Vicars
      - The Bishop’s Secretary
      - The Chairman and the members of the Standing Committee of the Council (for their term of office, whether or not during such term they remain otherwise qualified as members).

   B) ELECTED MEMBERS

   1. The priests (see clause 6) resident or engaged in pastoral work in each deanship shall freely elect one priest from among their number to serve as an elected member. It is anticipated that they will wish to appoint the Dean and they may do so. However, it is open to them instead to elect some other priest to serve as an elected member for the deanship. Those priests may also appoint an alternate priest (to be known as the Sub-Dean) to attend any meetings of the council at which their elected member cannot be present.
2. Priests ordained for less than 10 years (whether or not they have participated in election in deaneries) may elect one member from among their number, who shall serve for a term of three years from the date of his election.

3. Retired priests (whether or not they have participated in election in deaneries) may elect one priest from among their number, who shall serve for a term of three years from the date of his election.

C). The Bishop may appoint other priests to serve on the Council.

6. All priests, secular or religious, whether incardinated or not, who exercise some pastoral ministry in the Diocese, or who are incardinated but retired and living in the Diocese, have the right to vote in the election of members.

(Canon 498)

7. Elections shall be conducted in accordance with procedures agreed upon by each body of electors. In cases of failure to agree procedures and of disputed elections, the bishop shall determine the procedure or the resolution as the case may be.

8. Any priest holding a pastoral assignment in the Diocese is eligible for membership of the Council. The representative of the retired priests, who may of course hold no pastoral assignment, is also eligible, but he must reside in the Diocese.

9. The Council shall meet twice a year, or more frequently at the direction of the Bishop.

10. In accordance with Canon 500, the Bishop convenes the Council. Although President of the Council, he can require the Council to elect a Chairman from among its members to serve a three-year term. The Chairman is eligible for one further term of three years. The council may elect another priest to act as alternate for the Chairman for those meetings which the Chairman himself cannot attend.

11. The Council shall elect a Standing Committee to consist of the Chairman and four others, who may be elected or ex officio members. The Committee shall serve for a three-year term of office.
12. The duties of the Standing Committee are:
a) To convene the Council at the bidding of the Bishop.
b) To give notice of the meeting and to prepare and circulate the agenda
to all priests prior to the meeting.
c) To prepare and circulate minutes of the meeting and voting record.
d) To facilitate the efficient functioning of the Council and to
communicate to the Bishop all formal motions passed by the Council.

13. The Standing Committee should appoint a Secretary who shall himself be a
priest of the Diocese. He should undertake such duties as are delegated to him
by the Standing Committee, and should keep the Minutes of the Council.

14. The Council is to reach decisions by a simple majority except in matters of
particular gravity where the Bishop may direct that a two-thirds majority must
be obtained.

15. Voting is to be by show of hands but the Chairman may direct a secret ballot
to be held when he deems it necessary.

16. Voting is expressed by members on their own responsibility and not as
deleagtes of those who elected them.

17. Propositions and other matters for discussion may be proposed by:
a. The Bishop
b. The priests of a deanery, acting collectively
c. The Standing Committee
d. Any priest of the Diocese.
   It is understood that when a member puts forward a matter at the
request of a deanery, the proposal may not necessarily represent the member’s
own viewpoint.

18. A. The Standing Committee may use its discretion to exclude from the
agenda propositions presented for discussion which it feels have been
repeatedly aired in recent meetings. The reception of such propositions must,
however, be acknowledged by the Standing Committee.

B. It may also at its discretion exclude from the agenda propositions
expressed in intemperate or discourteous language, and refer them back to be
rewritten.

19. During the conduct of the meeting, voting is to be at the Chairman’s
discretion. A motion must be proposed and seconded before voting.

19. The Bishop may decide that any item is to be treated as confidential. This
ruling is to be respected by members of the Council.
20. A. The Council can never act without the Bishop. He alone has the authority to make its decisions public. All proposals for discussion should be given in writing with sufficient time for their scrutiny by the Bishop prior to the Meeting.  

(Ban on 500)

B. Any Other Business not already on the Agenda must be notified to and agreed by the Chair and the Bishop before the meeting.

21. Sede vacante the Council lapses, but the College of Consultors continues to fulfil its function. The Bishop must reconstitute the Council within a year of taking possession of his Diocese.  

(Ban on 501.2)

22. The Council can be dissolved by the Bishop after consultation with the Metropolitan. The Bishop must, however, reconstitute the Council within a year.  

(Ban on 501.3)

23. A quorum for meetings shall be the Bishop (or, if impeded, his delegate), the Chairman or his delegated substitute, and not less than half the members.

24. In voting, the Chairman has the right of a casting vote.

25. The Chairman’s decision shall interpret this Constitution on all matters, but any Council member shall have final appeal to the Bishop, with whom the Council’s authority lies.

APPENDIX: MATTERS ON WHICH THE BISHOP IS TO CONSULT THE COUNCIL OF PRIESTS

The Council is to be consulted by the Bishop:

A. in matters of serious moment.  

(Ban on 500.2)

B. before deciding to call a Diocesan Synod.  

(Ban on 461) [The members of the Council are to be summoned to a Diocesan Synod.  

(Ban on 463.1)]

C. before the Bishop decides it is opportune to decree the establishment of a Pastoral Council in each parish.  

(Ban on 536)

D. before secularising a church.  

(Ban on 1222.2)

E. before the Bishop consents to the building of a new church.  

(Ban on 1215.2)

F. in matters concerning taxes in the Diocese levied on certain bodies constituted for religious purposes.  

(Ban on 1263)

G. before erecting or suppressing a parish or changing parish boundaries.  

(Ban on 515.2)

H. before making regulations concerning the destination of certain offerings or parish funds.  

(Ban on 531)