

Absentee Voting Policy

Policy Statement

1. The purpose of this policy is to create opportunity for wider engagement in particular Member decisions in circumstances where Members are restricted from attending meetings in person (e.g. ill health, travel, age/frailty, work commitments, personal circumstances) and to aid the achievement of a quorum on specific motions.
2. The associated procedure will set out the means in which Member absentee voting will be conducted.
3. Encouraging attendance at Members' meetings remains a priority as it is considered important for Members to invest, partner and engage in the life of the Church.

Key Principles

4. The following key principles will be considered in the execution of this policy and associated procedure(s):
 - a. Member anonymity.
 - b. Integrity (one vote per Member).
 - c. Accessibility to all Members.
 - d. Reasonable notice has been given to the Member prior to the vote, along with sufficient information and/or opportunity for discussion to enable the Member to discern an informed vote.
5. This policy and any subsequent amendments or alterations will be reported at the next Members' meeting following such changes.

Applicability

6. Church Council will determine the appropriateness of the application of this policy to specific motions.
7. In making their determination, Church Council will consider the following:
 - a. The motion is unlikely to change at a Members' meeting (e.g. Appointment of Office Bearers, acceptance of the annual financial budget).
 - b. Discussion around the motion at a Members' meeting is unlikely to materially influence a Member's voting preference.

8. This policy and procedure shall also apply to meetings convened for matters of Pathway Community Centre Incorporated.
9. Absentee voting will not apply to the following types of motions:
 - a. Constitutional changes; or
 - b. Lead Pastor appointment or removal; or
 - c. Winding up of the Church.

Policy Authority

10. Church Council is responsible for the review and maintenance of this policy, which will be reviewed regularly and revised as required.

Implementation

11. Refer attached Absentee Voting Procedure.

Absentee Voting Procedure – Online Voting

Overview

1. Procedure description to be read in conjunction with the Absentee Voting Policy.

Terms and Definitions

Church – Clovercrest Baptist Church Incorporated.

Constitution – Constitution of Clovercrest Baptist Church Incorporated

Business Manager – The position of Business Manager within Clovercrest Baptist Church.

Secretary – The position of Church Council Secretary as appointed by the Church Council.

Head Scrutineer – Nominated by the Business Manager and appointed by the Members for a specific meeting.

Notice – Written notice in the form described under section Written Voting Procedure.

Register – Register of voters registered for an absentee vote for a particular meeting.

Volunteer – Delegate nominated by the Business Manager.

Eligibility

2. To be eligible to submit an absentee vote, a Member must:
 - a. Be a Member of the Church and eligible to vote (as defined in the Constitution) at the time the notice of meeting is issued (at least 14 days prior to meeting); and
 - b. Be unable to attend the meeting due one of the following circumstances:
 - i. Work commitments; or
 - ii. Illness or incapacity to attend; or
 - iii. Intrastate, interstate or overseas travel; or
 - iv. Caring for another person/s (e.g. parenting).
 - c. Be provided with access to vote. From time-to-time, the Church Council may determine another provision for an absentee vote, to ensure each CBC Member has opportunity to vote according to one of the Key Principles – Accessibility to all Members (as per 4.c. in the Policy). For example, a Sunday morning in-person meeting at Modbury North, allowing provision for absentee voting for our other campuses.
3. A Member who has lodged an absentee vote must not vote again on that motion at a meeting. (If circumstances change, the Member may attend the meeting but not vote again.)

Written Voting Procedure

4. The Member must provide written notice to the Church of their intention to submit an absentee vote (“Notice”). Written notice can be provided on a ‘Notice of Intention’ by:
 - a. Completing the form online on the Clovie website
 - b. Email to: office@clovercrest.com.au or
 - c. Posted to:
Att: Business Manager / Executive Assistant
Clovercrest Baptist Church
2 Famechon Crescent
MODBURY NORTH SA 5092
 - d. Attending the Church in person and completing a form at the front counter of the Church.
5. The notice must be received by the Business Manager:
 - a. for paper votes/paper ballots - at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled meeting date to enable sufficient time for voting, or
 - b. for online/mobile voters - by midday the day prior to the meeting.
6. The Member’s notice must state the following:
 - a. Full name of Member.
 - b. Reason for absence.
 - c. How the Member wishes to receive their absentee voting slip, via link by text message, by post/delivery, or to collect it from the Church Reception during office hours.
7. Prior to the Members’ Meeting or AGM the Business Manager will issue the Member with,
 - a. a link/s to voting for the meeting/s via their mobile phone, or
 - b. a paper ballot if required, via their preferred method (as soon as possible after receiving their Notice of Intention).
8. The Business Manager (or delegate) will prepare a Register of Members registered for absentee voting, and the unique identification code allocated to those with paper ballots. This Register will not be shared with any other person (except the Secretary or delegate) one (1) hour before commencement of the meeting.
9. Online Absentee Votes must be completed on the online system by 3pm on the day of the meeting.
10. Paper ballots/votes – the Member will indicate their voting preference on the form and seal it in the prescribed envelope. A Members’ absentee vote must remain anonymous. The only identifier shall be the unique identification code.

Paper ballots must be received at least 24 hours prior to the meeting commencing and may be placed in the locked Office pigeonhole in the Church foyer (during open hours). That is, with the exception of votes being returned by Australia Post, which must be received in the post delivery by 3pm on the day of the meeting. Postal votes are to be addressed to the Church, Att. Business Manager.

11. No sooner than (one) 1 hour prior to the meeting commencement, the Business Manager or their delegate will provide the Secretary (or delegate) with:
 - a. The Register of absentee voters.
 - b. The tally of online voting responses in a sealed envelope, along with the paper ballots with unique identifying codes in sealed envelopes.
12. The Secretary (or delegate) will use the unique identifying code or online election register to mark Members who have registered an absentee vote on the attendance roll (for quorum purposes). If circumstances change and a Member who lodged an absentee vote attends the meeting in person, they must not vote again and will not be issued any voting slips upon signing in to the meeting. NB the online election register does not reveal who voted for what, only who actually voted; the voting decisions remain anonymous.
13. The sealed envelope with the online voting responses, along with the paper ballots will be provided to the Head Scrutineer at the commencement of the meeting by the Secretary. A sealed envelope with online voting responses only for votes which are generally by 'show of hands' will be provided to the Chair of the Meeting prior to the commencement of the meeting, in order to determine the level of support of a less formal resolution by those not able to be present.
14. The scrutineer team will open the envelopes at the time of counting the votes received at the meeting.
15. Should a motion change substantially at the Members' meeting, the Members who are present may resolve to render absentee votes invalid for that motion and therefore not eligible to contribute to the vote on that particular motion.

Responsibilities and Separation of Duties

Business Manager (or delegate)

- Receive Notices of Intention.
- Issue voting link/s ahead of meeting; issues paper ballots/envelopes (with ID #s on envelope) as soon as possible after receiving a Notice of Intention.
- Maintain Register of absentee voters.

- Provide copy of Register to Secretary one (1) hour prior to meeting (paper ballots IDs and online voters).
- Provide the sealed envelope/s with absentee votes and online tally to the Secretary one (1) hour prior to the meeting (to give to Head Scrutineer).
- Provide a sealed envelope with online voting responses only for votes which are generally by 'show of hands' to the Chair of the Meeting prior to the meeting.

Secretary (or delegate)

- Receive Register from Business Manager one (1) hour prior to meeting.
- Mark roll for absentee voters.
- Ensure any Member that has submitted an absentee vote does not vote at the meeting.
- Provide sealed envelopes to Head Scrutineer at commencement of meeting.

Head Scrutineer

- Receive sealed envelope/s with unidentifiable votes.
- Open the envelopes and include votes and online tally in count.

Document approval and control

Version

Reference	Details
Version	16 – Online Voting Procedure (Policy – remains in original version)
Status	Procedures approved by Council.

File name and location

File name	Document location
Absentee Voting Policy and Procedure	Teams/General/Policies

Revision history

Revision version	Revision date	Summary of change	Author
12	4-3-2020	Policy unchanged/ Procedures updated for online voting	C Burton
13	24-9-2020	Finalised updates to Procedures following Council	C Burton
14	22/4/2021	Updated to include online votes for 'show of hands'	C Burton
15	18/4/2023	Updated procedure to extend NOI date for mobile votes	C Burton



Revision version	Revision date	Summary of change	Author
16	6/2/2025	Update to procedure to provide accessibility for all members - added 2. c. under Eligibility.	C Burton

Document approval (required – YES)

Title	Name	Date signed	Signature
yes			