

Bill No.6

Proposer: Mr Quentin Teggin

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When the Constitution of the Church of Ireland was adopted 150 years ago, incidences of an individual or family relocating from their parish to another part of the country would likely have been uncommon. Many individuals lived out their lives within a few miles of where they were born, often remaining within the parish where they had been baptised for their entire lives.

As such, revisions of the register of vestry members would largely comprise the addition of those coming of age and the removal of those who had departed this life. In such circumstances, an annual review of the register of vestry members was likely deemed perfectly adequate.

We live in very different times, with individuals and families regularly relocating throughout the island of Ireland and far beyond.

The current annual review cycle, which can vary by dioceses, means that an individual relocating to a new parish just after the register of vestry members has been reviewed, would have to wait nearly 12 months before being added to the register. Indeed an accustomed member of a parish that reviews its register in February (e.g Derry and Raphoe), leaving their parish in March, and wishing to become an accustomed member of a parish in Dublin (where reviews take place in January), would need to wait nearly two years as you cannot be an accustomed member of two parishes at the same time.

To me this is inequitable, in that an individual relocating in the opposite direction, could theoretically arrive in say Strabane in December, request removal from the register of their former Dublin parish in January and apply for registration in Strabane in February.

As Select Vestry members must be registered vestry members, the current review cycle means that an individual, eminently qualified (and willing) to be say a glebe warden, an office parishes

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can struggle to fill, may have to wait close to two years after arrival in a new parish to be nominated and take on that role.

Under this proposed amendment to the Constitution, Select Vestries would have the option to undertake a review of their register of vestry members during the year, addressing the inequity and shortcomings I perceive to exist under the current review cycle, should they so wish.

This last phrase is important. The amendment affords a Select Vestry the option to undertake an interim review of the register. The decision is solely at their discretion and there is no compulsion to exercise said option if a Select Vestry does not wish to do so.

Bishop, I propose that the bill be given a second reading.