The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Antigonish Diocesan Council

Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission

TO: Parish Council Past Presidents
FROM: Diocesan Past President, Anne McCormick
DATE: October 24, 2026
SUBJECT: Constitution & Bylaws: Know Your League
MEMO: # 1 (2026-2028)
CC: Parish Council Presidents, Diocesan Officers, Life Members, Provincial Secretary (for distribution to provincial counterpart)

Sisters in the League:

This is my first memo as your diocesan past president. A review of our duties and responsibilities is a good starting point for any position. As past presidents, our responsibilities include:

- Serving in a consultative capacity to the president
- Being responsible for archives and history
- Facilitating the study and implementation of the *Constitution & Bylaws (C&B)*
- Sharing updates to the *National Manual of Policy & Procedure* with councils
- Assisting councils in developing or updating their council Policy & Procedure Guidelines
- Being familiar with the 2023 Past President Handbook, # 611 available on the national website
- Performing other duties as assigned by the president

In this memo I would like to encourage past presidents to help members become more familiar with the national *C&B,* using the current 2023 version. The *C&B* is an important reference tool for every council. It helps us understand how the League operates and provides answers to many of the questions that arise in our councils. This year, amendments to the *C&B* were voted on in parish councils and the "Instructed Vote" was carried by presidents to diocesan, provincial and national conventions. Adopted changes will be reflected in an updated version of the booklet.

Members certainly do not have to memorize the *C&B*. What is important is knowing where to find the information when questions arise and taking the time to look up the answers. This helps ensure that the information we use and share is accurate, rather than relying on someone else's recollection or opinion.

I am suggesting short (five-minute) activities that can be incorporated into parish council meetings. The goal is to make members comfortable using the *C&B* as a reference tool. Consider dividing members into small groups and having several copies of the *C&B* available for members to share. These quick activities will help members learn how to navigate the booklet while having a little fun at the same time.

Proposed Activity 1: "Find it Fast": Give members a question and challenge them to find the answers in their C&B in 60 seconds. Then ask: "Who found it? What is the answer? Where did you find it?"

Sample questions:

- What constitutes a quorum for a parish council meeting?
- What are the 4 categories of membership in the League?
- What are the three standing committees of the League?
- When should the annual parish council meeting take place and for what purpose?

Proposed Activity 2: "Raise Your Hand if…": Read a statement (s) and have members raise their hands if they agree. Then say: "Let's see what the C&B says!" Allow 30 – 45 seconds to find the answer.

Sample statements:

- Nominations to executive office at the parish level can be made from the floor.
- An instructed vote requires the voting delegate to vote according to her conscience.
- A member shall hold only one office at a time at the level concerned.
- The annual membership fee includes subscription to *The Canadian League* magazine.

Proposed Activity 3: "Which one is correct?": Give members 3-4 possible answers to each question. Ask members to choose the answer they feel is correct and then locate it in the C&B.

Sample questions:
Who can vote at a parish council meeting? A. Only elected officers B. General and associate members with voting privileges C. Only the president and past president

The president shall: A. be a signing officer for all official documents B. be the official spokesperson for her council C. be an advisory member of all committees except the nominations and elections committee

The voting delegate carries an instructed vote for: A. Election of Officers B. Increase in per capita fees C. Amendments to the C&B

Proposed Activity 4: "True or False": Sample statements: Read these and have members decide if they are true or false. Use the *C&B* to confirm the answer.

Maria is 17 years old and Catholic and can become a general member of the CWL.
There are 80 voting members in our council; therefore, 40 members are needed for a quorum.
A CWL member may attend a diocesan, provincial or national AMM/convention only as a voting delegate.
Only the president can make a motion at a council meeting.
A member must be an officer to vote at a council meeting.
A motion must be seconded before it can be discussed.
The Constitution & Bylaws can be changed by a council at an annual meeting.

Hopefully you can use some of these activities or develop your own. They can easily be adapted to suit your council and can be used as a quick five-minute activity at a meeting. Remember, the *C&B* isn't just a book for presidents, secretaries and parliamentarians. It belongs to every member. Past Presidents, let's help our members know their League, know where to find the answers, and know how their League works. Most importantly, have fun with studying the C&B!

Your sister in the League,
Anne McCormick, Antigonish Diocesan CWL Past President