



— Diocese of —
Hereford

Proclaiming Christ ✦ Growing Disciples



The role of a Churchwarden

www.hereford.anglican.org



Canon E1

"The Churchwardens when admitted are officers of the Ordinary, i.e. the Bishop. They shall discharge such duties as are by law and custom assigned to them; they shall be foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent; they shall use their best endeavours by example and precept to encourage parishioners in the practice of true religion and to promote unity and peace among them. They shall also maintain order and decency in the church and churchyard, especially during the time of divine service."

Officer of the Ordinary (Bishop's Officer)

Churchwardens have a duty to try to deal with complaints, either about parish matters or the parish priest, at a local level. If this is not possible, the churchwardens should make a report to the bishop or archdeacon.

- Bishops, through the archdeacon and Rural Dean, make visitations to parishes to check on the fabric of the building and that records are kept correctly. It is the churchwardens' responsibility to make sure that all these things are in order, especially:

Quinquennial Inspection

Terrier and Inventory

Log Book – include everything that happens to the building

Fabric report for the APCM

Faculties

Insurance

- The churchwardens are required to answer the questions in the Archdeacon's annual Articles of Enquiry.
- When any repair or re-ordering work on the church building is being considered, churchwardens should consult the Archdeacon at an early stage.

**For more resources and information regarding Churchwardens visit:
www.hereford.anglican.org/churchwardens/**

Representing the Laity

You have been elected by a meeting of parishioners, not just church members: they have elected you to represent them. This means you will need to

- know the people. Of course you cannot know every one in the parish personally, but between you, you can grasp an awareness of those who are at the core of the church; those who are more on the fringe of church life, and those who never come but are significant in the community.
- understand the views of the different groups in the church. Young and old; strong and weak; newcomers and established families; mature Christians and enquirers.
- work together. Just one of you cannot represent the whole laity; you must use your different contacts, gifts to gain as comprehensive an awareness of the people as possible. Keep your eyes and ears open, and be accessible and approachable.

Co-operating with the incumbent

You represent the views of the laity, not just your own views: the incumbent comes with his or her views and experience. You need to:

- Engage in healthy interaction. Confrontation, or a trial of strength, will not be very creative. If you develop personal hostility, between minister and people. You have a vital role in encouraging real partnership, especially through the PCC.
- Communication – help the incumbent not to be the cork in the bottle!
- Care for the minister and clergy family. You will be aware of the particular pressures on the clergy and their families. You need to help them face the issues of Clergy Safety. Your care and support needs to be sensitive; not condescending, manipulative, or intrusive. Be aware of practical needs which you could help with. Above all, keep them in your prayers, and encourage others to pray for them.



Encouraging every member ministry

You are in an excellent position to:

- discover people's gifts (everyone has gifts/all have a place/function in Body of Christ).
- involve people in every sphere of Christian ministry
- make sure that the church's human resources are used wisely and well.
- explain and encourage Christian giving. Being an example of faith ("true religion")

Because of your representative role in leadership of the church, you are also an example by:

- being regular at public worship – engaging in worship.
- developing your own spiritual life through prayer, Bible study etc.
- seeking to be Christ-like in your behaviour. Promoting the mission of the church

As lay leaders you will be involved in and concerned for mission. Make sure that:

- mission is always high on the church and PCC agenda.
- your PCC gets into the habit of Mission Action Planning. Each year you need the cycle of review, plan, action. Then the vision remains fresh and focused, providing an agenda for the parish to work with .

Keeping contact with the wider church:

- You are the Bishop's officer. As Archdeacon I will see you at my Visitations. Please feel free to contact me for advice or support.
- Encouraging full participation in the Parish Offer process.
- During a vacancy or when your minister is sick, the Rural Dean is also there to help and support you.

The Ven. Derek Chedzey, Archdeacon of Hereford

The Ven. Fiona Gibson, Archdeacon of Ludlow