

# Being a Churchwarden

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# Welcome to your role as Churchwarden

Being a Churchwarden is a key role in the life of a parish. We understand that by accepting this role as a lay volunteer you are taking on some important roles and responsibilities alongside your vicar. You are partly responsible for the smooth running of your church and are considered by many as leading members of your church community. You need to make sure the church building and its grounds are well maintained, carry out certain legal and administrative duties, and serve on your Parochial Church Council (PCC). Your role as Churchwarden means that you are a Bishop's Officer, which also carries certain responsibilities.

Each *Parish Church* normally has two Churchwardens who are elected annually at the *Meeting of Parishioners*, which is part of the Annual Meeting. Some parishes with multiple buildings may have a number of Deputy or Assistant Churchwardens. Each individual will have their own strengths, weaknesses and interests so working together will help make it easier to get everything done.

There is a lot to do and it can seem daunting so this leaflet aims to make it easier for you to carry out the role of Churchwarden. It sets out your roles and responsibilities, what support you can get and gives details of extra information that can help you in your role.

Thank you for your willingness to fulfil this role. Churchwardens are one of the great gifts the church has and our prayer is that, as you carry out your duties, you will feel supported and enhanced in this vital ministry.

# The role of a Churchwarden

Many people make assumptions about what a Churchwarden does. Often people who hold this role will do things that are not strictly necessary for a Churchwarden to do, but do them because that is what has always been done in that particular church. This section sets out to explain what is expected of a Churchwarden.

## Maintaining the building

The maintenance of your church's property is an important part of your local mission. A Churchwarden is expected to:

- Maintain your church's property inventory; the *Log Book* of repairs and the *Terrier* (a record of church land including gardens and graveyards).
- Inspect the fabric of the church building and be aware of National Church and state law regarding this. This includes dealing properly with any furniture, vessels, robes and books.
- Obtain a faculty [permission] via the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) or your Archdeacon for any substantial alterations or repairs (see separate guidance on obtaining a faculty).
- Provide reports on this work to the PCC, the Annual Meeting and appropriate authorities.

## A Bishop's Officer

As a Bishop's Officer a Churchwarden is the Bishop's representative in the parish. Churchwardens are expected to:

- Answer any enquiries from their Bishop or Archdeacon and inform them of any situation where they may need to intervene.

- Perform ceremonial duties when a Bishop visits the parish or other similar occasions.
- Respond to the Articles of Enquiry (questions sent by the Archdeacons during the visitation process)
- Attend the annual visitation service – where Churchwardens and sidespeople are admitted into office.

## Governing the parish

A Churchwarden has many tasks that help the good and legal running of a parish. Churchwardens are expected to:

- Be part of a team, with the Treasurer, overseeing parish finances. This includes ensuring that all service offertory/collection money is securely and accurately counted and recorded.  
A Churchwarden must act as Treasurer if no one else is appointed to that role by the PCC.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of the PCC and, where the Electoral Roll is large enough, the Standing Committee too; taking part in effective decision making and helping to implement those decisions.
- Building close links with other leaders in the local church including clergy, Readers, Safeguarding Officers and employed staff (if any).
- Developing good relationships with your own parish clergy and their families.

## Supporting worship

As part of the smooth running of a church a Churchwarden is expected to:

- Make sure services run in a seemly and effective manner (particularly in the absence of their clergy).
- In cooperation with your clergy, ensure that there is a sufficient quantity of bread/communion wafers and wine for services of Holy Communion.

## When your parish has no Incumbent

A Churchwarden has an important role when there is a clergy vacancy in the parish, particularly taking charge of registers and being responsible for the collection and payment of statutory/parochial fees from weddings, funerals and burials (acting as Sequestrators).

# Supporting you

There is training, support and advice available for all Churchwardens. You can find that support through:

- Your Archdeacon and the diocesan Resources Team (see contact details on last page).
- By signing up to our weekly email bulletin and checking for training courses listed on the diocesan website.
- By checking the webpage [www.liverpool.anglican.org/being-a-church-warden/](http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/being-a-church-warden/)
- By attending our courses on particular topics.
- Through talking to colleagues in other parishes.

## How long do you have to serve

Each Churchwarden is elected for a period of one year and may stand for re-election in five consecutive Annual Meetings, before needing to stand-down for at least two years.

Although the *Meeting of Parishioners* may enact a resolution to change this limitation, we recommend that they don't and therefore each Churchwarden doesn't serve for more than six consecutive years.

## Useful web pages

- The faculty process  
[www.liverpool.anglican.org/faculties/](http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/faculties/)
- Recording service attendances  
[www.liverpool.anglican.org/attendance/](http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/attendance/)
- Parochial Church Council (PCC)  
[www.liverpool.anglican.org/how-a-pcc-works](http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/how-a-pcc-works)
- The Annual Meeting  
[www.liverpool.anglican.org/annual-parish-meeting](http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/annual-parish-meeting)
- Churchcare website  
[www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare](http://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare)

## What the law says

There are various legal measures that set out what a Churchwarden does and is legally responsible for.

- [Churchwardens Measure 2001](#)
- [Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991](#)

## Useful contacts

### Diocesan Advisory Committee

Faculties and alterations to buildings are key areas of concern to Churchwardens. The DAC Administrator, Chris Leggett, is always ready to help – contact details:

Chris Leggett: Tel: 0151 705 2122,  
Email: [chris.leggett@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:chris.leggett@liverpool.anglican.org)

### The Diocesan Website

Look at [www.liverpool.anglican.org](http://www.liverpool.anglican.org) for a whole host of useful information, or contact

St James' House, 20 St James Road, Liverpool L1 7BY  
Tel: 0151 709 9722

where the Central Services Team can help guide you to the right team for the advice you are seeking.

### The Archdeacons

Our Archdeacons have a particular role in supporting Churchwardens. Training days, information, willingness to help by phone, letter or email are all important parts of this role. They can be contacted at St James' House by telephone or by email:

Tel: 0151 709 9722

PAs to Archdeacons email:

Liverpool & Wigan and West Lancs

- [cindy.holbrook@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:cindy.holbrook@liverpool.anglican.org)

Knowsley and Sefton & St Helens and Warrington

- [Miranda.lever@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:Miranda.lever@liverpool.anglican.org)

### The Resources Team

The Resources Team have real expertise in relation to finance and to charity law (these have real implications for churches):

Tel: 0151 705 2180,

Email: [resources.team@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:resources.team@liverpool.anglican.org)

## Church Representation Rules and Elections

Gordon Fath can also help with queries about parish elections and constitutional matters:

Tel: 0151 705 2180,

Email: [gordon.fath@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:gordon.fath@liverpool.anglican.org)