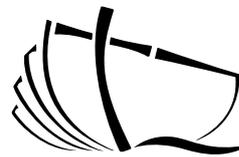


Churchwardens

A summary of their role and position



Diocese of
Liverpool

Qualifications

To apply for election to the office of Churchwarden, each candidate must:

- be baptised and on parish's Electoral Roll
- be an *actual communicant* of the Church of England¹
- be 21 years of age or older
- not be disqualified from being a Charity Trustee
- not already be serving on the PCC of another parish

Number

In each parish there shall be two Churchwardens elected for each parish church², unless otherwise specified within the *Pastoral Scheme*.

Election

Churchwardens are elected at the *[Annual] Meeting of Parishioners* to be held in each parish on or before 31st May of each calendar year.

Nominations must be received by the chair in writing prior to the start of the meeting.

If an elected individual ceases to have their name on the Electoral Roll of the parish, for any reason, then they shall be deemed to have vacated their office.

Each elected candidate shall appear before the bishop, or their appointed substitute, by 31st August each year in order to be admitted to the office of churchwarden.

Term of office

The *Term of Office* for all Churchwardens is one year. Standard church rules allow for five consecutive re-elections (six terms of office in total – six years), following which an individual cannot stand for election to the office of Churchwarden for the next two consecutive annual meetings (effectively two years).

The re-election bar can be put aside by a *Meeting of Parishioners* by formal resolution, which would then apply from the next annual meeting if adopted. The re-election bar can be similarly reinstated by any future annual meeting.

Resignation

As Churchwardens are officers of the bishop, any resignation must be tendered in writing to the diocesan bishop; local clergy have no authority to accept or reject a Churchwarden's resignation. Resignation takes effect from two months after the bishop's receipt of such a resignation letter, unless an earlier date is agreed in writing by the bishop.

¹ Received communion at least three times during the last 12 months, according to the rites and traditions of the Church of England, and on a Parish Electoral Roll [Rule 83(2)].

² Parish Church status requires building to be approved by *Church Commissioners* and consecrated, or building (or part of the building) is licensed as the *parish centre of worship* by bishop.

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Deputy Churchwardens

Deputy Churchwardens do not legally exist outside of a recognised team ministry, or those parishes that have more than one licenced place of public worship, **and only** with the agreement of the bishop. (In single place of worship parishes such individuals are in fact *Assistant Churchwardens* and have no legal status other than that of a Sidesman³.)

Powers and Duties

Have joint possession, with incumbent, of the church building and churchyard.

Have right to prevent entry to church building by any lay person not attending a service of public worship.

Have legal ownership of all movable furniture and ornaments, but may not remove any such furnishings or ornaments from the building without proper faculty permission.

Have legal duty to record and maintain information about the church and its lands within the *terrier*⁴, *inventory*⁵ and *log-book*⁶. They are also required to annually inspect the fabric of the church and present their findings to the PCC.

Have a duty to maintain order within the church. However, they may not interfere with the conduct of services by an authorised minister.

Have a duty to provide seating for those attending services of worship.

Have a duty to answer any and all questions, as part of the archdeacon's visitation, at the end of each term of office.

Have a duty to inform their bishop of any irregularity or failure of duty of which the bishop should be informed.

At the direction of the minister shall provide a sufficient quantity of bread and wine for the number of communicants receiving during services of public worship.

During a period of vacancy within the benefice (where there is no incumbent nor allocated priest-in-charge) they have custody of the church registers and duty to ensure they are properly maintained.

During times when the minister is incapacitated, or the benefice is in vacancy, they may invite other duly authorised ministers, clergy or lay, to lead/officiate at public worship, as appropriate.

Casual Vacancies

Casual vacancies to the office of Churchwarden shall be filled in the same manner as the vacating churchwarden was so elected.

(Document revision date: January 2020)

³ Canon E2 (Of sidesmen or assistants to the churchwardens).

⁴ Record of all lands appertaining to the church.

⁵ Record of all articles and items appertaining to the church.

⁶ List of all alterations, additions, repairs and other events affecting the church and its lands.