

Churchwarden's Handbook



Diocese of Canterbury
CHANGED LIVES ➞ CHANGING LIVES

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Churchwarden's role and responsibilities

The main duties etc are set out in: Church of England Roles and Responsibilities document Churchwardens Measure 2001 Canons of the Church of England Canon E1. The role of Churchwarden is a ministry - not just a job! This booklet contains a summary of the key areas of the Churchwarden ministry.

Leadership

Churchwardens are a key part of the leadership of their church. As well as sharing leadership of the day-to-day life and ministry of the parish, they often know their parish's journey, people and context very well and can play a vital part in discerning the vision and future direction of mission in their church. Within this planning, it is important for Churchwardens to be aware of their deanery and diocesan contexts. The Canterbury Diocesan strategy "Towards A Flourishing and Sustainable Future" can be found at www.canterburydiocese.org/strategy



Each deanery will have its own local, evolving strategy, which you need to know about. Liaise with your parish Deanery Synod representatives to find out about this. The life of your parish sits within the context of its deanery and diocese, and thus any planning and strategy needs to take account of this wider picture.

Social media

...can be a useful source of communication, support and advice between Church Wardens. There is a closed Church Wardens group on Facebook.

Does your deanery have a CWs email/WhatsApp/chat group? If not, maybe you would consider setting one up! Liaise with your Deanery Lay Chair for advice.

Useful websites

- <https://cofeportal.org> gives access to all C of E services
- www.churchofengland.org lots of information and a good search engine
- www.parishresources.org.uk lots of info downloadable forms etc all free!
- www.canterburydiocese.org the diocesan website

Resources

Two books recommended by other Churchwardens. Both available from eden.co.uk, Amazon and others.

Practical Church Management £30.00

The Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors £14.99

Both from Church House Bookshop

Other useful titles

The Churchwarden's yearbook

www.churchwardenbooks.co.uk £16.95

Church House Bookshop £17.95

Lots of information, including altar frontal colours, the dates for every saint you've ever heard of, lectionary and helpfully runs from Advent in the previous year to January in the one following the Diary date. It also tells you which 'Common Lectionary Year' you are starting on the first Sunday of Advent - very helpful when trying to find a reading!

The Churchyards Handbook

A bigger look at this subject. £12.99 at Church House Publishing

www.chpublishing.co.uk/books/9780715143018/the-churchyards-handbook

All these books would be a legitimate expense to claim back from your Church Treasurer

Property matters

(As to the church, the churchyard and the movables)

- Keeping the property register formerly called the terrier and inventory and the logbook is the specific responsibility of the Wardens, who should keep them up to date and make sure they are able to hand these over to the new wardens at the time when one retires and another takes over.
- The property register is a list of land belonging to the church and a list of all the items belonging to the church
- The logbook a detailed record of all the alterations, additions and repairs carried out in relation to the church, its land and its contents.
- Wardens are required at least annually to make a sufficient inspection of buildings and contents, and the last PCC meeting before the AGM the wardens must report to the PCC and then to Annual Parochial Church Meeting on all the property matters.

- Although it rarely matters, all the moveable items of the church are technically the property of the churchwardens. Nothing can be sold without the authority of a faculty.

Spare pages for both the logbook and property register can be obtained from:

www.amazon.co.uk

www.eden.co.uk

www.chbookshop.co.uk

www.wesleyowen.com

Good order

- The Wardens must preserve decency in the church and the churchyard, ensuring that the church is kept clean and in good repair, and the graveyard well maintained.

They are required to see that all is in order for services, whilst there are usually church members responsible for various aspects, the warden needs to be sure that:

- The altar frontal and other items is the right colour for the day
- The sidesmen, lesson readers, intercessors, coffee makers etc are all present
- There are sufficient wine and wafers for a communion service
- Candles are in good order, and topped up if you are using oil ones
- The altar is 'laid up' for communion if the server or sacristan is not there to do it
- That the correct service books are being given out and a set is in the priest's stall. The readings have been found in the lectern lectionary or bible.
- If there is a visiting clergy minister who will require payment, that the treasurer is aware and provision has been made.
- That if there are banns to be read that the banns book is ready.
- You may also need to place the offertory plate in its usual place depending on your church's custom.
- Place a glass of fresh water in the priest's stall.
- Ensure priest has clearly written copies of any notices you wish given out.
- Is the sound (loop) system switched on?
- Heating and lighting are as required.

In practice, many of these tasks will be delegated, but Wardens must have oversight and know that everything is in place, whether they themselves are present or not.

Records

Records which should be preserved

- Registers of baptisms, marriages, burials, banns and confirmations
- Register of services
- Orders of service for special services held at the church
- Documents relating to property, e.g., title deeds, inventories, terriers, maps and plans
- Documents relating to the church fabric, especially major restorations and alterations, including quinquennial survey reports, church logbooks, faculties, specifications, plans, correspondence and photographs
- Papers concerning special parish projects
- Papers regarding benefactions
- Papers relating to legal rights and duties and disputes
- Union of benefice papers, plurality orders and pastoral schemes and orders
- Parish profiles, compiled during vacancies in benefices
- Vestry minutes
- Parochial Church Council minutes, detailed agenda, and reports
- Parochial Church Council account books and annual statements of account
- Churchwardens' accounts
- Records of the overseers of the poor (including overseers' accounts, rate books, apprenticeship indentures, bastardy papers and settlement papers)
- Records of the surveyors of the highway
- Records of the parish constables
- Records of local charities
- Records of local schools
- Parish magazines, church guides, and publicity material produced by the parish (one copy of each issue)
- Minutes, accounts, etc. of auxiliary organisations, e.g. choir, bellringers,
- Mothers' Union, Sunday School

Records which can be destroyed

- Marriage and baptism certificate counterfoils
- Banns, burial and disposal certificates
- Baptism and banns applications
- Parochial Church Council cash books, paying-in books, bank statements, bills, used cheques and other subsidiary financial records

- Correspondence regarding routine parish administration and routine financial matters
- Superseded insurance policies
- Circular letters sent out by other organisations
- Files relating to former personnel
- These documents can be disposed of when no longer needed for administrative purposes. For legal reasons, all financial records should be retained for seven years.

Archives and church records

Diocesan Record Offices

Churches in the pre-2011 Archdeaconry of Maidstone
(Exemptions held by Maidstone All Saints, Lenham St Mary, Wormshill St Giles, Bethersden St Margaret)

The Kent History and Library Centre, James Whatman Way, Maidstone ME14 1LQ,
tel 08458-247200; email historyandlibrarycentre@kent.gov.uk

Churches in the pre-2011 Archdeaconry of Canterbury
(Exemption held by Ash St Nicholas)

Canterbury Cathedral Archives, The Precincts, Canterbury CT1 2EH tel 01227
865330, email archives@canterbury-cathedral.org

Legislation

- Parochial Registers and Records Measure (1978, amended 1992): non-current registers and records over 100 years old, and registers whose earliest entry is 150 years old, should be deposited in a Diocesan Record Office.
- Data Protection Act
- Financial regulations

Good record-keeping

- Quality ink, e.g. Registrar's ink (obtainable from Ecclesiastical Stationery Supplies, www.registrarsink.co.uk, tel 01440-760360)
- Stable, dry conditions
- Secure conditions
- Avoid paperclips, brown paper etc

Further information

- 'Keep or Bin' for detailed information on which records need to be kept, and why: www.cofe.anglican.org/about/librariesandarchives/keeporbin, or by post from the

Church of England Record Centre, 15 Galleywall Road, South Bermondsey, London SE16 3PB.

- A Guide to the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 (as amended at 1st January 1993, available from Church House Publishing, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN.
- www.kentarchives.org.uk and <http://archives.canterbury-cathedral.org>: online catalogues for the History and Library Centre and the Cathedral Archives, with listings of parish documents held in the record offices
- James Behrens, Practical Church Management (1998), chapter 24
- ‘Building on history’ project website: www.open.ac.uk/Arts/building-onhistory-project For guides on writing church and parish histories.
- Conservation by Design, www.conservation-by-design.co.uk, for paper conservation products, e.g. silica gel.

Emergency cover

In case of emergency, if a priest or service leader is unable to attend for the main service at short notice, the Churchwardens are responsible for making sure an act of worship takes place. There may be Lay readers/ALMs/ experienced leaders available to help, but if not, it is perfectly acceptable for the Churchwarden to use the Morning Prayer service from the Book of Common Prayer or Common Worship.

Churchyards

If the church has an ‘open’ churchyard, that is burials are still allowed in it, the wardens should ensure that it is kept in good order. This may involve the removal of dead flowers or inappropriate items left on graves. This is a sensitive matter however so should be undertaken with care. The hazards of ‘leaning’ gravestones etc cannot be underestimated, they remain the property of the deceased’s family and where possible they should be contacted to have them maintained. Where they cannot be traced or the suggestion is to lay stones flat, the DAC should be contacted as this may require a faculty.

‘Closed’ churchyards are the responsibility of the local civic authority.

There should be a plan of the churchyard if possible, in any event of the area used for newer burials and ashes plots, this should be kept up to date.

If you are interested in making your churchyard wildlife friendly contact Diocesan House who may be able to put you in touch with an advisor.

Reports and meetings

Churchwardens are expected to make various reports each year to the PCC and to the annual parochial church meeting. They may be trustees of some charitable trusts connected with the church. They are expected to attend all the meetings of the PCC and the standing committees, and should meet regularly with the parish priest.

Formal occasions

Churchwardens are chosen to be officers of the Bishop. If he/she or their representative, the archdeacon, visits the parish to attend a service, the wardens are expected to be present to greet, and to precede them in procession carrying their staves. The level of formality will be determined by the occasion and the preferences of the Bishop and senior team.

Visits and visitations

The Annual Visitation

Following the period of the Annual General Meeting when the churchwardens are elected, they are asked to attend at Canterbury Cathedral or at another church to be sworn in. This is also the occasion when the Archdeacon will deliver an address and pass on information and news of developments which will be of importance to the Churchwardens during the year. Usually before the service they are asked to complete a card to show that they have attended and are duly sworn in as the Bishops Officers in the parish. Customarily Sidespersons and members of the PCC have also attended and been sworn in but it is the Churchwardens who are legally required to do so. If unable to attend, alternative arrangements must be made with the bishop's office.

Area Dean's Visit

Every 3 years or so, the Area Dean, usually accompanied by the deanery Lay Chair, will visit the wardens to complete a visitation on behalf of the Archdeacon. They will probably wish to inspect your records, possibly your church building and may have other questions about the life of your church which will vary from Deanery to deanery. A questionnaire is sent to you ahead of the visit.

Church Building - Quinquennial Inspection

A quinquennial inspection is carried out on every church by an approved Architect to survey the state of the building and make recommendations. The parish bears the cost of this inspection. If you wish to change your architect they will need to be approved by the DAC.

Parish Records - Quinquennial Inspection

The Diocesan Archivist may carry out a quinquennial inspection of Parish registers, records and archives, to check that they are in good condition and being correctly stored,

also that only a fountain pen with registrars ink* is being used for their completion. This ink can clog fountain pens so either wash it out with water between fills or obtain an old fashioned 'dipping pen'.

*Ink supplies can be obtained from E.S.S Tel 01440 760 360 or online at registrarsink.co.uk or Amazon and others 'Diamene' is a good make or theonlinepencompany.com Tel 01299 826744.

Everything in its place

Churchwardens should be aware of where things are kept within their buildings and make sure rotas and noticeboards are up to date with key information clearly available to those who need it.

Items listed on the church property register of a minor nature such as worn linen or hymn books can be disposed of by listing 'beyond reasonable use'. Other items, of course, may need a faculty.

When it comes to papers and records the following pages carry an excellent aide memoire from the Archives department, some items may need to be sent or taken to your local archive.

Don't forget to share and delegate the work

Being a churchwarden should be enjoyable. Many of the tasks previously listed can be delegated, but make sure you know who is doing what and that everything is running smoothly.

Parish Vacancy

In the event of the parish becoming vacant, the Churchwardens, alongside the PCC and the Area Dean, have responsibility for the running of the parish and the delivery of services. This can be a daunting prospect, but there is support Available - Area Deans and Lay Chairs will be on hand to guide CWs through this time - don't hesitate to contact them whenever you need to.

Pastoral responsibility

As the bishop's officers, churchwardens are required to support their incumbents and their families. They should get to know them and pray for, and with, them as often as possible. Churchwardens should never publicly disagree with their clergy. If there are differences they should be discussed in private. Only if ministers fail to carry out their duties, or commit immoral or criminal acts should churchwardens withdraw their support and report the matter to the Archdeacon or the Bishop.

Looking out for the wellbeing of your incumbent is a privilege and a very crucial part of the Churchwarden's ministry.

Churchwardens are also often in a position to be aware of any situations which arise among the congregations—anyone who needs extra care, any unrest, disagreement or concern - and can act as a sensitive channel of communication between the incumbent and parishioners.

The Churchwarden and money

While the funds of the church belong to the PCC, it is the responsibility of the Churchwardens to safeguard the money collected in churches until it can be handed over to a designated individual, like the treasurer. If the parish is without a treasurer, the churchwardens must assume the treasurer's responsibilities until a new one is appointed.

For any cash collections, Churchwardens should ensure that at least two people count the money and record the amounts in the Service Register.

Similarly, gift aid envelopes should be opened, and the amounts noted on the outside of the envelopes as well as in total in the service register before being given to the person in charge of the parish's Gift Aid.

The registers typically have two cash columns for this purpose: one for cash and another for envelopes and those involved in the counting should sign or initial the register.

Please be aware, that under no circumstances should envelopes be forwarded while still containing donations.

The Diocese of Canterbury encourages every PCC to enrol in the Parish Giving Scheme to manage regular parish contributions. You can find out [more about PGS here](#). Alternatively, please contact the Generous Giving Team at generousgiving@diocant.org

Churchwardens should stay informed about their parish's financial situation, particularly concerning the payment of Parish Share, clergy expenses and Parochial Fees, although these are ultimately the responsibilities of the entire PCC.

The Finance Team at Canterbury Diocese are available for help or guidance regarding the treasurer's obligations, please reach out to them at finance@diocant.org and for help with Gift Aid claims and HMRC registrations, contact the Generous Giving team at generousgiving@diocant.org

Health and safety

Your parish may have a Health and Safety subcommittee, but you should be aware of any issues.

Do you have the right number and type of fire extinguishers, a first aid kit, an accident book?

In most cases common sense must prevail. Again, Ecclesiastical Insurance and the Church Buildings Council have copious amounts of advice on their websites.

- www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-health-and-safety/
- www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/insurance-health-and-safety

You should be aware of particular needs for ‘working at height’, church events, building works, hiring your premises etc

Our church building

Do those changes or repairs need a faculty? Do we need planning permission? Where can I get advice?

Advice and guidance on all aspects of the care and maintenance of church buildings is provided by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC).

The Committee is appointed under the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991, primarily to offer advice to Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) and to the Commissary General of the Diocese about proposed works to church buildings and churchyards.

The DAC forms part of the work of the Communities and Partnerships Network and can help with:

- Faculty applications, now completed online at facultyonline.churchofengland.org
- Planning of building projects in a church,
- Advice on protecting church buildings,
- Guidance for those living in church owned housing, and general and specialist advice on church maintenance.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) has a number of experts who will give you free advice on subjects as diverse as trees to structure. In the first instance ALWAYS contact them to check.

Kevin Tucker is the DAC Secretary (ktucker@diocant.org).

Every church must also have an inspecting architect who carries out a quinquennial (5 yearly) inspection and also give advice about your church building.

Church security

All churches should be insured. This is a PCC responsibility, but Wardens should be aware, and most are covered by:

Ecclesiastical Insurance Office Plc.
Beaufort House
Brunswick Road
Gloucester
GL1 1JZ

For enquiries phone 0845 777 3322

For claims phone 0845 603 8381

Or email churches@ecclesiastical.com

Contrary to common belief, they believe that if any building should be kept open it is churches.

Good advice is available at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters where you can find downloadable comprehensive guidance notes on keeping your church open, and general security.

If the worst comes to the worst, you will need:

Insurance policy number.....

Renewal Date.....

None of this is a substitute for common sense so never 'hide' a key in an unlocked public area that gives access to valuables.

Always put brass and other tempting items of value away when the church is open.

Why not work through Ecclesiastical's 'How safe is your church'?

www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/self-assessments

Employee and Public Liability

Check you have a current certificate from the insurers displayed in the church.

A list of occasional tasks

Check in with all the teams in your church, cleaners, flower arrangers, servers, welcomers, sacristan, musicians, tech team, fabric team, administrators, gardeners, caterers—anyone who contributes to the life of your parish. Are they OK? Do they need anything? Make sure they know they are valued and given due thanks for all their work.

Check Registers etc, send or take any that are full to the archive.

Check that the parishes Data Officer has all the figures needed to fill in the annual Returns.

Check that you are getting copies of invoices for work done on the church and churchyard from the treasurer for the logbook.

Check the church linens for cleanliness and state of repair, also the choir robes, clergy and servers' robes that are kept in the church.

Are all equipment orders in hand - e.g. candles, oil for candles, communion supplies, kitchen and cleaning supplies, stationery, Christmas/Easter resources.

Check that service registers are completed and up to date.

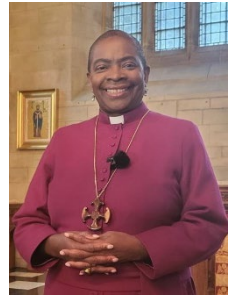
Check that sound and screen equipment is well maintained.

Check that any inspections, e.g. fire extinguishers, security alarms and servicing of church systems have been carried out as necessary.

Key contacts

Bishop of Dover

The Right Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin:
Old Palace, Canterbury, CT1 2EE
01227 459382
BishopofDover@bishcant.org



Archdeacon of Ashford

The Venerable Darren Miller:
The Archdeaconry, Pett Lane, Charing,
Ashford, TN27 0DL
01233 712649
darren.miller@archdeacashford.org



Archdeacon of Canterbury

The Venerable Dr Will Adam:
29 The Precincts, Canterbury, CT1 2EP
01227 473597
archdeacon-canterbury@diocant.org



Archdeacon of Maidstone

The Venerable Andrew Sewell:
The Archdeaconry, 4 Redcliffe Lane,
Penenden Heath, Maidstone, ME14 2AG
01622 934449
andrew.sewell@archdeacmaid.org

