

**The Parish Church of**

**ROLE DESCRIPTION: Churchwarden**

**The Churchwarden**

A Churchwarden is an elected lay official in a parish church of the Anglican Communion. is the Bishop’s officer, and is usually admitted to office each year by the Archdeacon on behalf of the Bishop at a special service. By time honoured practice there are two Churchwardens for each parish church.

The two Churchwardens, with the incumbent, are generally responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the parish. Churchwardens are vital to the health and well-being of church communities. It is an important and, at times, a demanding role.

A Churchwarden is an *ex-officio* member of the Parochial Church Council and, because the church is itself or is a part of a Registered Charity a Churchwarden is subject to the legal requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the regulation of the Charities Commission (see Appendix Two).

A Churchwarden is an Office Holder of an historic role in church life, has legal and ecclesiastical responsibilities governed by Canon Law and is one of the most visible members of the team of people authorised to give leadership in the running of the Parish Church, which is a part of the Diocese of Ely and the Church of England. Everyone in such a position is expected to conduct themselves in church and in their lives in the community in a decent, respectful and safe way which is not capable of bringing the Parish Church, the Diocese or the Church of England into disrepute. A failure to adhere to this principle may result in the removal of the Churchwarden from office, in the termination of this agreement and may also engage the safeguarding and disciplinary procedures of the Diocese.

**The responsibilities of Churchwardens** are laid down in the Churchwarden’s Measure 2001 and the Canons of the Church of England E1.4 and E1.5, which state:

• Churchwardens shall be foremost in representing the laity and in cooperating with the incumbent.

• They shall use their best endeavours by example and precept to encourage the 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.

• The property, in the plate, ornaments and other moveable goods of the church, is vested in them, and they should keep an up-to-date inventory of these items, and deliver them to their successors.

• In exceptional circumstances, such as the unforeseen or unavoidable absence of a Minister, Churchwardens also have the authority (and can be called upon) to lead the congregation in a Service of the Word.

**The role has three chief components:**

• To make a key contribution to the strategic leadership of the church they serve as it discerns, articulates and implements God’s vision for his church in the parish.

• To oversee the maintenance and development of the churchyard, church building and its contents, and the smooth running of the church as a Christian community. This includes legal and financial aspects of church life.

• To care for and encourage the vicar and the whole church membership in their joint ministry and mission within and beyond the parish.

**A more detailed list of responsibilities is set out in Appendix One.**

**Accountability:**

The Churchwardens are accountable to the Bishop, usually via the Archdeacon.

Required for role:

• To be over 21 and on the electoral roll, a confirmed and communicant member of the Church of England.

• To take the annual Oaths of Office and to complete and sign the Fitness to Office declaration form.

(and before taking office)

• To complete and sign a Diocesan Safeguarding Confidential Declaration form and provide suitable references.

• To complete an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check – repeated every 3 years.

• To complete Basic Awareness, Foundation and Rasing Awareness of Domestic Abuse. The Leadership Course will be required if the parish is in interregnum..

**Support for Churchwardens.**

The ministers and PCC of this church intend to support and encourage you in this ministry by:

• Ensuring there is a good handover with the outgoing churchwarden and a supportive induction process.

• Praying for the ministry of the churchwardens.

• Providing, via the incumbent, an annual review of the role and workload.

• Ensuring that Churchwardens are not overworked or overstretched and assisting with the delegation of their work

• Providing information about of diocesan training events for churchwardens.

• Providing access to practical help and appropriate resources from the Diocese and the Church of England.

• Encouraging the identification and use of gifts among church members so that some of the tasks currently done by the churchwardens are delegated.

**Length of service**

• Church Wardens are elected annually at the APCM.

• It is hoped that Church Wardens will commit to serving for a minimum of 3 years but we aim to ensure Churchwardens can retire either at the end of that term or after a maximum of 6 years.

• A churchwarden wishing to step down from office should inform the incumbent but must tender his or her resignation to the Bishop by giving two months’ notice in writing.

**Safeguarding in the Church of England**

The Church takes the safety of everyone within the church very seriously and expects that everyone will work within the Church safeguarding policy. In particular, the Church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk or of actual abuse, to immediately raise this with Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Those who work with children, young people and/or adults who are vulnerable should have a commitment to:

* Treat individuals with respect
* Recognise and respect their abilities and potential for development
* Working in ways that meet and develop the personal, spiritual, social and pastoral needs
* Promote their rights to make their own decisions and choices, unless it is unsafe
* Ensure their welfare and safety
* The promotion of social justice, social responsibility and respect for others
* Confidentiality, never passing on personal information, except to the person you are responsible to, unless there are safeguarding issues of concern which **must always** be reported to the person named above.

In relation to safeguarding, the churchwardens work with the incumbent, PCC and parish safeguarding officer to:

* Ensure that in the period of a vacancy (during an interregnum), that the incumbent’s safeguarding roles and responsibilities are fulfilled, in consultation with the PCC, parish safeguarding officer and the area dean;
* Pay attention to the specific needs of children and vulnerable adults when undertaking health and safety inspections and risk assessment;
* Ensure that risk assessments are carried out before new activities are undertaken;
* Ensure that all parish activities with children and vulnerable adults are adequately supervised and insured;
* Ensure that the parish has procedures for responding to complaints and grievances;
* Answer questions regarding safeguarding as they arise in the archdeacon’s visitations, and respond to any specific safeguarding advice, which may be given from the archdeacon.

**Equality and Diversity**

The parish church is called to offer a Christian welcome to everyone irrespective of ethnicity, gender or gender orientation, age, religion, or backgound. The Diocese of Ely has also adopted a Dignity at Work policy which is available on the Diocese of Ely website and which applies equally to paid employees and volunteers. Churchwardens are expected to be active agents of the above calling and policy and always to behave with courtesy, respect, dignity of office, sensitivity, fairness, and to be conciliatory and even-handed.

For more information please refer to the document *The Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Officers and Bodies Practice Guidance* which can be found on-line at

[*roles-and-responsibilities-practice-guidance.pdf (churchofengland.org)*](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/roles-and-responsibilities-practice-guidance.pdf)

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| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Date Appointed |  |
| I have read this Role Description and agree with its requirements and expectations of me | Signed  Dated |
| Incumbent | Signed  Dated |

**Appendix One**

The detailed responsibilities appropriate to the role of a churchwarden at this church are as follows:

**A. Administrative**

1. Meet regularly with the incumbent (about every 6-8 weeks) for prayer, mutual support, review and planning.

2. As ex-Officio members (and as far as is possible) to attend all Standing & Finance and PCC meetings.

3. During a vacancy of the Incumbent to act as sequestrators, sharing in the running of the financial issues of the parish and arranging for the provision of proper people to conduct the services until there is full appointment.

4. As those ultimately responsible to the Bishop, the Archdeacon and the Incumbent for the financial health of the church, to report any concerns they may have as to the way this function (which is devolved to the Treasurer and to the PCC) is being carried out

5. Arrange for collections taken during services to be counted in a way which respects the privacy of the donor and arrange for such collections to be banked promptly.

6. Attend the Archdeacon’s Annual Visitation to make their Oath of Office and to hear her/his Charge.

7. Ensure that appropriate Church records are being maintained and are up-to-date.

**B. Liturgical/Ecclesiastical**

1. Ensure key decisions are communicated to the congregation and individuals.

2. Ensure that the church is always made ready and opened for services, that suitable and decent linen and altar requisites are provided and that suitable persons are appointed, trained and equipped for this purpose.

2. Ensure that people are properly welcomed to the church and to all services (of worship and of the pastoral offices), and that (for this purpose) sidespeople or vergers are appointed.

3. Ensure the number of persons attending (and where appropriate, receiving communion) at weekly and festival services is recorded in the Services Register.

4. Ensure the provision of weekly Notice Sheets is undertaken by those appointed by the Incumbent.

5. Ensure that suitable provision is made for the opening and closing of the church building at such times and on such days as may be agreed between the PCC and the Incumbent.

6. In an emergency (or by direct consultation with the Rural Dean during a vacancy or shared Incumbency) Churchwardens are authorised to lead Divine Worship by offering a ‘service of the word’. Churchwardens can expect training, support and resources in order to ensure that they are able to do so with confidence and correctness.

**C. Maintenance**

1. Undertake regular inspection of buildings and contents and at the PCC meetings and at the Annual Parish Council Meeting (APCM) give regular reports on the condition of these.

2. Ensure faults, defects and maintenance needs are noted and actioned.

3. Maintain the log-book.

4. Maintain the Terrier & Inventory of the church’s moveable property.

5. Ensure the maintenance and security of the church moveable property.

6. Represent the parish in all faculty applications..

7. Sign off contracts and completed works on the fabric of the church.

8. Ensure that all appropriate insurances are in place.

9. Ensure that the PCC has all legally required policies in place, including safeguarding, and that they are implemented, and reviewed annually.

10. Attend project contract meetings with the contractors and architect as required to ensure coordination of contractors with daily service requirements.

11. Ensure the church Architect performs the required Quinquennial inspections and take responsibility for the subsequent Archdeacon’s Parochial Visitations.

**D. Generally**

1. To perform any other related duties as they arise or as may be lawfully and reasonable delegated to them by the Bishop, Archdeacon, Incumbent or PCC.

**Appendix Two**

**General duties of a Charitable Trustee.**

For more information please go to the Charity Commissioners’ Website at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission) and search for Trustee Duties or to [www.parishresources.org.uk](http://www.parishresources.org.uk/) and search under Trusteeship

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| Your legal duty | It’s vital that you |
| Act in your charity’s best interests | Deal with conflicts of interest |
| Manage your charity’s resources responsibly | Implement appropriate financial controls Manage risks |
| Act with reasonable care and skill | Take appropriate advice when you need to, for example when buying or selling land, or investing (in some cases this is a legal requirement) |

Trustees who act in breach of their legal duties can be held responsible for consequences that flow from such a breach and for any loss the charity incurs as a result. When the Commission looks into cases of potential breach of trust or duty or other misconduct or mismanagement, it may take account of evidence that trustees have exposed the charity, its assets or its beneficiaries to harm or undue risk by not following good practice.