

## Purpose of the Role

Churchwardens ensure the smooth and effective running of St Stephen's as both people and place. They work with the vicar to lead in the life and mission of the church community. They promote unity and peace, representing the congregation before the vicar and ensuring that their pastoral needs are met. They steward the church building and its possessions, ensuring good upkeep and repair. And they uphold good order both in the foreground of facilitating public worship and in the background of governance and compliance.

Each of these aspects is infused with the legal function of the churchwarden as officers of the bishop. This legal function and its responsibilities are outlined in the *Churchwardens Measure 2001*.

## Practical considerations

Churchwardens are key leaders within the life of St Stephen's. Beyond the key responsibilities outlined below, anyone appointed to the role must commit themselves to being present in St Stephen's and the wider community, and in forums of discussion with other key leaders.

Notably:

- **Churchwardens commit to meeting fortnightly with the vicar** at a mutually agreeable time both to discuss the life of St Stephen's and to pray.
- **Churchwardens are *ex-officio* members of the PCC and the standing committee.** These committees each meet on alternate months on a Monday evening (i.e. standing committee meets on one week, PCC meets a couple of weeks later, and then there is a 6-week gap until the next standing committee meeting).
- Sharing responsibilities between themselves, **churchwardens meet with other church groups** including the finance committee, buildings team and pastoral care team.

## Key Responsibilities

The churchwarden role varies considerably between local churches. It can, however, be broken down into 4 strands:

- Mission
- Pastoral care
- Buildings and contents
- Order

Churchwardens are not expected to fulfil every part of the role themselves. Rather, they are expected to have oversight, bringing their own experiences and expertise to bear on the different parts of church life. That churches appoint two churchwardens, not one, underlines that the work is shared, and that each warden brings their unique talents and skills to the role.

## 1. Mission

- Collaborate with the vicar as a key leader in mission
- Ensure that the Parochial Church Council (PCC) both has and acts upon an up-to-date Mission Action Plan (MAP) which highlights St Stephen's priorities for sharing the good news of Jesus with our wider community
- Ensure that the church building is open to the public as much as is reasonably possible (churchwardens are primary keyholders, though others can and do provide access)
- Maintain good relationships within the wider community

## 2. Pastoral Care

- Ensure that the pastoral work of St Stephen's is undertaken both in the parish and amongst the congregation
- Provide pastoral support for the vicar and his/her family as they journey through public-facing ministry

## 3. Buildings and contents

- Maintain the terrier (list of land and buildings) and log book (record of alterations and repairs to the church)
- Maintain proper records of any property transactions
- Maintain a list of all trusts and charities associated with the parish
- Update annually the inventory and photographic records of every item belonging to the church
- Ensure all valuable items are kept securely
- Present an annual report on the fabric of the church (and other church properties) to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)
- Liaise with our Premises Manager and the Buildings Team to attend to any routine maintenance and upkeep, and respond to any urgent maintenance or repair needs
- Ensure that any repairs highlighted in our five-year quinquennial inspection (next due in 2026) are carried out within the timeframe outlined
- Consult the Archdeacon and relevant Diocesan authorities on any major repairs or alterations to the church, and ensure that relevant permissions are in place before work begins

## 4. Order

This strand can be broken down in two. There are foreground matters connected with order in public worship. There are also background matters connected with governance and compliance.

### Foreground (worship)

- Encourage the whole church in faithful worship, leading by example
- Liaise with the vicar to ensure that worship takes place on Sundays and on any day required by Church Law
- Facilitate occasional services (e.g. funerals), organising appropriate volunteers
- Ensure service registers are filled in appropriately
- Remove any person(s) actively disrupting a service or showing intent to do so

The following areas are usually delegated to our Duty Wardens, and in turn the Welcome Team or other helpers:

- Extend a warm welcome to all and especially to newcomers, ensuring that there is adequate seating, lighting and heating
- Enable access for those with mobility needs
- Ensure that the various mechanisms for financial giving are available, particularly during Sunday services

### **Background (governance and compliance)**

- Support the vicar with administrative tasks relevant to the churchwarden role
- Ensure that the PCC adopts and implements a Safeguarding Policy annually
- Ensure that proper procedures are in place for recruiting staff and volunteers, liaising with the Parish Safeguarding Officer(s) and Safeguarding Administrator
- Ensure that the PCC has and implements an up-to-date Health and Safety policy
- Arrange an annual fire drill, liaising with the Premises Manager
- Liaise with the Treasurer to ensure proper systems are in place for financial affairs including:
  - The counting, recording, holding and banking of monetary collections
  - The payment of expenses to clergy, staff and volunteers
  - The insurance of the church building(s) and contents
  - The payment of all bills
  - The payment of the PCC's contribution to the Diocesan Common Fund
  - The preparation and submission of end of year accounts and other returns
  - The submission of all relevant documentation to the Charity Commission
- Oversee preparations for the Archdeacon's triennial parochial visit (last visit in 2021 so next visit due)

## **5. Less routine responsibilities**

Should a PCC Treasurer resign or be unable to serve, churchwardens fulfil this role together.

In the unplanned absence of the vicar, churchwardens should liaise with the Area Dean (currently Fr David Neno at St Peter's, Ealing) to arrange cover, or plan to lead non-eucharistic worship themselves. Churchwardens must also check that any visiting clergy who ordinarily serve in other Dioceses have appropriate permissions (i.e. permission to officiate).

Should the vicar leave his role permanently, churchwardens should notify the bishop and the patron immediately. Together with the Area Dean, the churchwardens are usually appointed as Sequestrators who take responsibility for all parish matters during the vacancy.

## **Personal attributes**

Underpinning every practical responsibility is the responsibility of good character, presenting a faithful Christian presence to church members and the general public. Indeed, churchwardens must be able to win the confidence of the whole parish community. Specifically, you will be:

- Willing and able to undertake the role
- Honest about your strengths and weaknesses, remembering that churchwardens are supported by various teams and individuals
- A baptised member of the Church of England, committed to your own spiritual growth
- Committed to St Stephen's, the flourishing of its members, and its engagement with the wider community
- Committed to good safeguarding practice, undertaking all relevant training for the role
- Willing to engage with – and help lead through – change
- Able to challenge in an appropriate, supportive manner
- Able to instigate and manage difficult conversations
- Able to manage sensitive information and, where needed, understand confidentiality and data sharing
- Able to promote unity and peace within the life of St Stephen's, and in the wider parish community

## **Other Aspects of the Role**

Due to the nature of the role, there is a genuine occupational requirement that the post holder is a practising Christian. They should also be a regular member of St Stephen's Church who can demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding children and adults.

The role will be subject to a satisfactory basic DBS check, according to the Church of England's safer recruitment processes.