

The Benefice of Witney consists the parishes of Witney and Minster Lovell.

Churchwardens

1.1 Introduction

There are two churchwardens for each parish. Churchwardens are appointed to the Parish Church; they have a duty of care across the whole Parish, not being confined to their particular church or place of worship.

The Canon Law of the Church of England (Canon E1 paragraphs 4 and 5) states: The churchwardens are the officers of the Diocesan Bishop. They shall discharge such duties as are by law and custom assigned to them; they shall be foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the Team Rector; 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. In the churchwardens is vested the property in the plate, ornaments and other movable goods of the church, and they shall keep an inventory thereof which they shall revise from time to time as occasion may require. On leaving office they shall duly deliver to their successors any goods of the church remaining in their hands together with the said inventory, which shall be checked by their successors.

In addition

- if a person chosen as churchwarden is an actual communicant and has their name on the church electoral roll of the Parish, that person will automatically become a member of the PCC until they either cease to satisfy those qualifications or cease to be a churchwarden In the event of a churchwarden being chosen that does not have their name on the electoral roll, that person will be co-opted as a member of the PCC;
- if the PCC fails to appoint a treasurer, the churchwarden(s) who are members of the PCC will be responsible for discharging the office of treasurer (CRR App II para 1(e)(i));
- churchwardens may also be trustees of other parochial charities by virtue of their office; and;
- during a vacancy in the Benefice, the churchwardens will be the sequestrators together with the rural or area dean and anyone else whom the bishop appoints (Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1992 s.1(1)). (In the case of a team ministry, the team vicars and certain other members of the team take the place of the rural or area dean as automatic sequestrators except so far as the bishop directs that any of them are not to be included.)

In the Declaration of Office, the churchwardens have to make and subscribe to the Diocesan Registrar: "I do solemnly and sincerely declare that I will faithfully and diligently perform the duties of my office."

1.2 Profile of a churchwarden

The Church is the Body of Christ, and through Baptism every member is called to ministry and service. Churchwardens are called to special responsibilities, indeed, this the highest position of trust and responsibility that the Church gives to lay-people. Churchwardens should regard this as a calling to be fulfilled to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the well-being of the Church.

With the clergy, they share the administration of the Parish, and in the care of the church buildings. They:

- are the legal owners of all the movable property of the Church - they are responsible for the maintenance, safekeeping and availability of all the consecrated and unconsecrated goods and ornaments;
- have the right in law to remove from the Church and/or Churchyard anyone who is causing a disturbance or who threatens to do so. In this regard, they are assisted by the Sidesmen;
- are members of the Parochial Church Council ex-officio;
- are responsible for all things financial but normally this is delegated to the treasurer;
- promote the whole mission of the church, which is pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
- carry an official wand or staff of office at special services. The churchwardens escort the Bishop because he is the Ordinary (and they escort the Area Bishop or Archdeacon when they represent the Ordinary) - this is about a legal and temporal jurisdiction, not a Spiritual one, they are the officers of the Ordinary and as such accompany the Bishop as part of his household.

Wardens must strive to maintain their own lives of faith and not let them become stale. Wardens also care for the clergy of the parish.

In summary, the role of a warden is leadership, labour and love.

1.3 Appointment

The election of churchwardens is subject to the Church Representation Rules: they are chosen by joint consent of the Team Rector of the Parish and the Annual Meeting of the Parishioners.

2. Deputy churchwardens

In addition, there are up to two deputy churchwardens for each district church. These are voted at the APCM. The deputy churchwardens shall, in respect of their respective churches, exercise the functions, powers and duties of churchwardens under the supervision and direction of the churchwardens.

The Instrument gives delegated authority to the deputy churchwardens to carry out the duties listed above (Reference 1.2) subject to the Churchwardens Measure 2001.

The Churchwardens Measure 2001 guide states, 'Deputy churchwardens have a recognised legal status under the Church Representation Rules (or, in some cases of team ministries, under the Pastoral Measure 1983.) However, unlike churchwardens under S.1(2) of the Measure, deputy churchwardens are not "churchwardens" in the strict legal sense and are not within the terms of the Measure, and their functions are confined to the particular church or place of worship. They are not the bishop's officers, but exercise functions as indicated above.'

3. Parochial Church Council (hereafter referred to as the "PCC")

In the Church of England the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956, section 2, sees the PCC as holding the responsibility with the Team Rector for making sure the church fulfils its proper roles and functions.

The members of the PCC are the charity trustees and are the 'persons having the general control and management of the administration of the charity' (Charities Act 2011, s177).

As charity trustees, PCC members will

- Follow Charity Commission guidance;
- Always act responsibly;
- Ensure that all decisions are taken for the benefit of the PCC;
- Always act in accordance with the governing documents and policies;
- Not seek personal benefit (commitment to the cause must be the main reason for serving as a trustee).
- Give due diligence and time to preparation for PCC meetings and attendance at PCC meetings.

In general, 'It shall be the duty of the Team Rector and the parochial church council to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the Parish.' Some of the functions of the PCC are set out as: 'co-operation with the minister in promoting the mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.'

The role of the PCC is to be the visionary body which looks at big strategic matters and then has an overarching role within the Parish in order to provide clear governance. The PCC will focus on discernment, strategy and oversight. As such, a PCC will be formed to act in this way on behalf of the whole Parish whilst delegating authority to the DCCs for the everyday running of the individual churches.

The role of the PCC will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) to work with the Team Ministry;
- (b) approve and monitor budgets;
- (c) create and agree the relevant Terms of References for, but not limited to, the following:
 - Standing Committee;
 - District Church Councils;
 - Finance Committee;
 - Personnel Committee, and;
 - such other committees and working parties that are agreed.
- (d) accept and review the progress of the mission of the individual churches;
- (e) approve and raise faculties to the diocese;
- (f) monitor progress on all outstanding matters;
- (g) interact with the deanery synod and handle relationships with the community at large, the Saint Mary's Preservation Trust and with other churches and faith communities.

4. District Church Councils (hereafter referred to as the “DCCs”)

The DCCs are the place where much of the business of the individual churches is raised and dealt with. The DCCs will have clearly delineated delegated authority to deal with the matters which the PCC gives to individual churches. DCCs will also have responsibility for developing the welfare of the church community and undertaking statutory duties as required by the PCC. Whilst the PCC may have ultimate authority, it discharges that responsibility best when it delegates adequate authority to the DCCs to manage the individual churches and holds them accountable for the result. This means that the DCCs possess real management authority from the PCC.

The individual DCCs may wish then to have further sub-committees/teams/task forces.

5. Windrush Church Ecumenical partnership

Windrush Church is a pioneering initiative between the Benefice of Witney and the Baptist Union, led by an Ecumenical Pioneer Minister, to be a pioneering presence within Witney and the surrounding villages. This is an intentional working together as we have identified a strategic approach to pioneering mission in new areas of housing and more widely in missional opportunities at this time.

The Ecumenical Pioneer Minister will be a member of the Ministry Team in the Benefice of Witney, remaining as a Baptist Minister and under the care of the Baptist Union.

The Anglican understanding is grounded in Canons B43 and B44 of the Church of England’s Canon Law. Under the 1988 Ecumenical Relations Measure, the Church of England lists the Baptist Union as a church with ecumenical relations.

6. Vacancy in the Benefice

In the event of a vacancy in the Benefice, the Area Bishop shall, as a matter of urgency, nominate a suitable candidate to chair the Annual Parochial Church Meeting until such time that the vacancy has been filled and is established in the Parish.

7. Precedence of documents

In the event of any discrepancy, inconsistency or divergence arising between the CRR Scheme 2022, the Governance Policy 2024 and Financial Policy & Governance 2024, the CRR Scheme 2022 shall take precedence.

Summary

The Benefice of Witney					
Witney PCC					Minster Lovell PCC
Two Churchwardens of the Parish					
St Mary the Virgin	Holy Trinity	St John the Evangelist, Hailey	St John the Baptist, Curbridge	Windrush Church	St Kenelm
Parish Church [DCC]	Chapel-of-Ease [DCC]	Chapel-of-Ease [DCC]	Chapel-of-Ease	Ecumenical partnership with the Baptist Union	Parish Church
Two Deputy Churchwardens	Two Deputy Churchwardens	Two Deputy Churchwardens	Two Deputy Churchwardens		Two Churchwardens

GOVERNANCE POLICY 2024



Adopted by Witney PCC 13 May 2024

Adopted by Minster Lovell PCC 4 June 2024

Signed *Kate Banks*

Counter-signed *Jeremy Lasman* Witney PCC

Counter-signed *Judith Warwick* Minster Lovell PCC

Review date: 5 years from date of adoption