



Churchwardens pack

Anglican Diocese of Bendigo

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Any feedback or suggestions please contact

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This pack contains:

1. An introduction to the Role of Churchwarden - **Please read first**
2. A copy of the Parish Administration Act – Diocese of Bendigo 2010
3. The Parish Administration Policy Handbook 2013
4. Code of Practice for Congregations: The Joys and Responsibilities of being a Christian in this Parish
A document developed and adopted by the Diocese to assist congregation to encourage harmonious relationships.
5. Being Together: A General Synod statement on congregational values
6. Faithfulness in Service: A Code of Practice for church workers and leaders
Adopted by General Synod. Primarily developed for clergy and ministry related staff, but now being extended to volunteers in a number of categories in parishes. (Please see Diocesan policy document Lay Authorisations and Required Checks)
7. A Parish Council Covenant
This comes from Church Consultant Tim Dyer

The Role of Churchwardens

Introduction

Welcome to being elected or appointed a Churchwarden in the Diocese of Bendigo. It is a position of significant responsibility and leadership in your parish/congregation. It is a position of trust and is a reflection of the goodwill and esteem in which you are held.

The Church is the Body of Christ on earth and the role of Churchwardens, above all else, is to see that the part of the body to which they belong is in good health.

Jesus told us to love one another as he loves us. As Christians we know our life together is strengthened when our behaviour is consistent with our faith. However our experience of being together can be challenging, particularly when there are differences. So it is important to be clear about what is loving, appropriate behaviour towards each other (Being Together)

This pack is designed to help you in your role as Churchwarden.

The duties and responsibilities of a Churchwarden as set down in the Parish Administration Act are:

- (a) to act with the Incumbent in planning and developing the work of the Church both within and beyond the Parish and by their own examples to encourage all parishioners to establish an active and intelligent Christian witness;
- (b) to ensure that there is proper pastoral support for the Incumbent and the Incumbent's immediate family;
- (c) to ensure that adequate provision is made by each congregation for the proper preservation and safe custody of the Church Registers and all Church plate and other valuables;
- (d) to ensure that an inventory is kept of all Church property whether movable or immovable;
- (e) to have the care of all Church buildings within the Parish, the Rectory and other buildings, Church grounds, furniture and all other items necessary for divine service;
- (f) to report to the Annual Parish Meeting on the condition of all Church property and of any expenditure necessary to keep the residences of the clergy of the Parish in good order and repair;
- (g) to report to the Bishop any grave irregularities in the performance of divine service or of any willful neglect of duty or misconduct on the part of the Incumbent;
- (h) to have special responsibilities in the time of ministry transition including providing satisfactory evidence of means when the Parish is considering a new appointment;
- (i) to ensure that a current Parish Profile is maintained for the use of Parish Nominators in the event of a vacancy;
- (j) To see that the Parish is informed of the Code of Practice relating to those authorised for ministry in the Parish;
- (k) such other duties and responsibilities as may be delegated to them with their consent by the Parish Council.

Churchwardens Meetings

Churchwardens are expected to meet with the Incumbent on a monthly basis, using an established Agenda, and (as necessary) with a written record of decisions being kept.

Churchwardens' meetings should deal with matters such as

- Primary maintenance and environmental issues for parish buildings
- The employment of parish staff
(youth workers, organists, administrators, auditor etc.)
- Financial matters, “ensuring that all accounts, Diocesan and otherwise, are paid in a prompt and timely manner”
- The preparation of Diocesan Returns, for approval and prompt submission by the Parish Council
- Clergy leave requests (to be submitted to Diocesan Registry)
- The Agenda for Parish Council meetings in conjunction with the Rector

The meeting should also have a pastoral dimension, where mutual concern for the Parish's leaders, Incumbent (and family members) and Churchwardens is considered.

Code of Practice for Churchwardens

1. Churchwardens are to understand their role as being:

- An executive of Parish Council
- A confidant to the Rector or Priest in Charge
- They are, in their behavior and speech, to set a standard that is exemplary

2. Churchwardens should be familiar with the following documents

- a. The Joys and Responsibilities of being a Christian in this Parish (Code of Conduct for congregations)
- b. Being Together: A General Synod statement on congregational values
- c. Faithfulness in Service: A Code of good practice for church workers and leaders. Originally developed for clergy it is now extended more widely
- d. Parish Council Covenant: This should be handed out at the first Parish Council meeting following the Annual Meeting and adopted by the Parish Council as a Code of Practice

3. Churchwardens in the Diocese of Bendigo are required to have:

- a. A National Police Check (free when applied through the diocese)
- b. A Working with Children Check. Make sure you get the volunteer rate
- c. Attend a Safe Church Awareness Workshop, held regularly across the Diocese

The General Synod statement 'Being Together' is a good starting point for all Churchwardens in establishing a Code of Practice for their role in the parish.

1. Being a Community

- We will **seek the common good** of the church, not just our own interests.
- We will **encourage each other to participate** in the life of the church.
- We will be **aware of how our behaviour affects others**.

The role of a warden is to help build and encourage the common good of the church community. This means acting in accordance with the Biblical principles of honesty, fairness and accountability.

2. Relating to each other

- We will **treat each other with respect and dignity** irrespective of ability, gender, sexuality, race, age, or contribution of the church.
- We will **act with integrity and honesty** in our interactions with each other.

While churchwardens will obviously have friends in the congregation(s), you are urged to treat all parishioners the same as much as possible.

3. Communicating with each other

- We will **communicate respectfully** with others, and not in a way that threatens, belittles or humiliates.
- We will **respect confidences**, and refrain from speculation and gossip.

Wardens are leaders and good communication is essential.

Practically, what does this mean?

- Be careful with your use of language
- Wardens should refrain from any physical contact with parishioners, except for shaking of hands
- Do not visit parishioners in their own home. Always take another warden or Parish Councillor with you. Preferably one of the opposite sex to yourself.
- Make sure that diocesan protocols in relation to the handling of church funds are observed and maintained
- Be very cognizant of boundaries; you are not expected to do everything or solve every problem in the parish. Consult, seek advice, call the Diocese!