

Church Wardens

Church Wardens are officers of the Bishop, and are answerable to him. They make annual declarations to him or his appointed officer each year, usually at the Visitation service (or, in our case this can be delegated to a parish occasion of public worship at an earlier date, nearer to AGMs).

Wardens are responsible for the 'infrastructure' of the Church: that is, with all that makes church possible and provides a proper context for the priest to work, and the congregation to worship.

In practice this means that the wardens are responsible stewards of the Church fabric and all the property of the church. They are responsible for keeping inventories and terriers. They are responsible also for the organisation of sides people and generally for the ministry of welcome. In the absence of an elected Treasurer, a Warden is expected to take on that role. Wardens will be signatories to church accounts and ex officio members of the Church council. In the occasional and unexpected absence of a Licensed Minister, a Church Warden may read prayers and lead worship. On special occasions, it will be the wardens who are primarily involved with the priest in their organisation.

Wardens are expected to cooperate with their priest and Council in all that furthers the Christian faith, and the mission of the church in the parish. They have a duty of care towards their priest. They should be a first port of call for a priest who is experiencing practical problems.

Wardens are responsible for keeping order in church. What that might mean is that Wardens can have a mediating role in disputes, and have a direct line of communication with the bishop or archdeacon if they have problems in the exercise of these or other duties.

Wardens should set an example of diligence, faithfulness and probity. They will make an annual report to the AGM and may be required to report to diocesan authorities on particular matters from time to time. To be a Church Warden is an honour and great responsibility, and should be regarded as such by both clergy and laypeople alike.