

## **Sidespeople** (including members of the Welcome Team)

The duty of sidesmen and women, as stated in Canon E2, is to “... **promote the cause of true religion in the parish and to assist the churchwardens in the discharge of their duties in maintaining order and decency in the church and churchyard, and especially during the time of divine service**”.

Specific duties include the following:

- To welcome everyone, and to ensure that they have all the appropriate books, service sheets, newsletters etc.
- As and when necessary, to indicate available seats to visitors.
- To assist the churchwardens in maintaining decency and order within the church and churchyard.
- In conjunction with the vicar and churchwardens, to administer the collection and offertory procession.
- To watch out for anyone who is taken ill (fainting etc.) and to provide suitable assistance where necessary.
- To provide accurate attendance and communicant figures for each service.
- To seek out visitors, and to obtain and record the name(s), address and other contact details of all newcomers, and to pass such information to one of the clergy at the end of the service.
- To ensure that children are safely escorted to Junior Church at the appropriate point in the service and that should very young children become distressed during the service, that their parents are made aware of the helpful facilities (eg, toy bags) which are available to them.
- To make sure that the Church is left tidy after each service, and that all books and service sheets have been put away.

Sidesmen and women should ensure that they are present in Church at least 30 minutes before the commencement of a normal service (45 minutes in the case of a major/festival service), and it is helpful if they remain by the door until the first hymn has ended to assist any latecomers. It is also helpful for them, when on duty, to sit near the door in order to welcome and hand books and other materials to anyone who arrives after the service has commenced.

*This is only a summary of the duties involved. Please refer to the ‘Welcomers Information Pack’ for a comprehensive description.*

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# The Role and Duties of Churchwardens, Members of the PCC, and members of the Sidespersons and Welcome Teams

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## Churchwardens

The role and duties of churchwardens, as defined by Canon E1, are as follows “***The churchwardens, when admitted, are officers of the Ordinary. 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 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.***”

Chief among these diverse duties is assisting the incumbent in encouraging true religion and unity within the parish by means of their teaching and personal example; as demonstrated by regular attendance and participation within divine service, prayer meetings and all other such events designed for this purpose.

The customary duties of churchwardens vary from parish to parish, time to time, and person to person. However, the idea of the churchwardens being solely responsible for the care, maintenance and insurance of the church fabric no longer prevails, as this responsibility now lies with the PCC as a whole. However, the following specific duties do remain:

- To inspect or cause an inspection to be made of the fabric of the church and all articles appertaining to the church.
- To deliver to the parochial church council and the annual parochial church meeting a report on the fabric of the church and all articles appertaining to the church.
- To produce to the parochial church council, as soon as practicable after the beginning of each year, the terrier, inventory and log book in order that the council may discharge its functions in relation to the fabric and articles appertaining to the church.
- They also have certain duties in law: having responsibility for the moveable property of the church; maintaining order in church (with powers of arrest); providing seats for parishioners and the organisation of sidesmen and women (who are indeed known as ‘assistants to the churchwardens’).

As officers of the Bishop, the Churchwardens report to him annually at the Service of Admission of Churchwardens, or as need requires.

## Membership of the PCC

PCC stands for Parochial Church Council, and the measure of 1921 which brought PCC’s into being said “***It shall be the primary duty of the council in every parish to co-operate with the incumbent in the initiation, conduct, and development of church work both within the parish and outside***”.

The synodical Government Measure of 1969 clarified the nature of this work as “... ***the whole mission of the Church - pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical***”. It sounds like an enormous task, but the scope is intended to give a wide mandate rather than to lay out an impossible task.

Membership of the PCC includes three essential functions:

**Practical** The PCC is not just a talking shop. Its decisions have consequences, and all members are required to take responsibility for their successful implementation.

**Advisory** The PCC should act as an advisory body to the incumbent and other individuals or groups who are seeking to initiate and maintain mission and ministry within the church. It also has a prime role in reviewing past events and projects and proposing future improvements in which its members will be fully involved by providing positive, pro-active support.

**Spiritual** The work of the Church is chiefly about proclaiming and establishing God’s mission of salvation to His creation. Consequently, members must have the issues of God’s Kingdom and the gospel as their primary concern. With this in mind, the foundational ingredient of PCC membership should be playing an active role within the corporate prayer life of the Church.

Other specific duties include the following:

- To maintain the financial affairs of the church, including the collection and administration of all monies raised.
- The care, maintenance, preservation and insurance of the fabric of the church and the goods and ornaments thereof.
- The care and maintenance of the churchyard.

**Membership of the PCC is a spiritual venture, which requires all of its members to demonstrate a clear example to others through their own private and corporate prayer and regular church attendance.**