



Wardens in the Diocese of St Asaph

The Constitution of the Church in Wales emphasizes that Churchwardens shall discharge “such duties as are assigned to them”. T

his recognises that there is much variation in local custom. The Diocese recognizes this and wishes to affirm local custom and practice.

There have, however, been questions asked about the difference between Mission Area Wardens and Churchwardens. In a legal context as the Mission Area is the parish, the Mission Area Wardens are, in the context of the Constitution of the Church in Wales, the ‘Churchwardens’ of the Parish and the local Wardens are ‘Sub-warden’. The Diocese has, however, decided to use the terms Mission Area Wardens and Churchwardens.

As a framework, the following is suggested as a way in which responsibility might be shared in a collaborative way:

A) Duties of all Wardens

All Wardens ‘shall be foremost in representing the laity and in consulting and co-operating with the Incumbent; they shall use their best endeavours to promote peace and unity amongst the parishioners, and by example and precept to encourage the parishioners in the practice of true religion’ In order to do this, we encourage you to be: i. Faithful in the reading of the Holy Scriptures ii. Diligent in your prayers iii. Regular in attending public worship and receiving Holy Communion.

B) Responsibilities of Mission Area Wardens

To be ‘foremost in representing the laity [in the Mission Area] and in consulting and co-operating with the Mission Area Conference through the following:

- i. Leadership: Working with the Mission Area Leader and Trustee Board (of which they are ex officio members) to ensure that Mission Area strategy is appropriately implemented.
- ii. Support: Exercising a particular role of support to and care for the Mission Area Leader.
- iii. Bishop’s Officer: Being in attendance when the Bishop is present in the Mission Area and in the case of any difficulty which cannot be resolved by the Mission Area Conference dealing directly with the Archdeacon or Bishop.
- iv. Administrative: Ensuring, with the Trustee Board that Archdeacon’s Returns are completed on request and by the due date each year.
- v. Enabling and Encouraging: Enabling and encouraging the Wardens in each local community in their task and, in the case of sickness or vacancy, making sure that duties are carried out.

vi. Vacancy: Cooperating and collaborating with the Shared Ministry Team, the Trustee Board and the Archdeacon during a vacancy for the Mission Area Leader.

vii. Worship: If exceptional circumstances require, it is customary for a Warden to lead worship in a church, using either the Ministry of the Word from the Holy Eucharist or Morning or Evening Prayer with the Readings for the Day.

C) Responsibilities of Church Wardens

To be 'foremost in representing the laity [in the local community] and in consulting and co-operating with the Trustee Board through the following:

i. Representative: Representing the laypeople of the local church community and making sure that concerns are relayed to Mission Area Conference representatives.

ii. Support: Exercising a ministry of support to the Shared Ministry Team, particularly in relation to making sure that the buildings are prepared for divine worship.

iii. Bishop's Officer: Being in attendance when the Bishop is present in the Mission Area and particularly when he is present in the local community.

iv. Administrative: Assisting the Mission Area Wardens with preparation of the Archdeacon's Returns for the local church community.

v. Vacancy: Co-operating and collaborating with the Mission Area Wardens and during a vacancy the Mission Area Leader.

vi. Worship: If exceptional circumstances require, and there is no worship leader present, it is customary for a Warden to lead worship in a church, using either the Ministry of the Word from the Holy Eucharist or Morning or Evening Prayer with the Readings for the Day.

vii. Fabric: Making sure that the church fabric is in good order by inspecting it from time to time and reporting any issues to the church committee and any serious issues to the Mission Area Conference.