

## 2. CHURCH COUNCILS & OFFICERS

### 2.1. *Why change?*

By reducing the numbers of people actually involved in overseeing the local Church, we achieve several things:

- This lighter structure means everyone should know who is responsible for what job, and you and they know what they are expected to do!
- It challenges people to service, and uses their gifts. Those who are not leaders can concentrate on doing well the jobs they are gifted to do: visiting, youth, worship, community work, administration etc.
- Leaders are there to help people do their tasks, not to do the tasks themselves
- Leaders know that they do not have to serve for more than three years so may 'put more into it', and may be less daunted by taking office.
- Not having a large number on the Leaders' Meeting (some had 50 or 60) means there will be people available for election each year. Each one can bring 'freshness'.
- As people join task groups to do jobs in the church, their confidence increases and new Council members begin to emerge, and present Council members get to move on to other ministries!
- It frees folk to serve in their sphere of interest instead of demanding that they also lead.
- It hands ownership of the Church to the Church!
- It allows ordained people to fulfil their calling better, by lessening some responsibilities, including much administration.
- It increases fellowship as people get to know one another in different roles

## **2.2. Job Descriptions for Church Council Officers**

### **Society Steward**

**Appointed for a three year period**

**To be the official lay representative of the Society**

- Represent the Church at civic or inter-Church functions or events.
- Be one of the two representatives from your Society on the Circuit Executive
- Promote the worship and witness of your Church in the local community.

**To be a member of the Church Council**

- Attend regular Church Council meetings.
- Carry out the responsibilities and duties of the Church Council as led down in the Manual of Laws. *(2005 Minutes of Conference, pp 34-36 or Connexions 'HOW TO...' Folder pp24-28.)*
- Be available to attend Working/Task Groups as appropriate.
- Have an overview of all that is happening in the different Task Groups.
- Help each Task Group to have a perspective on the others.
- Be part of the minister's Advisory Group to nominate members for election to the Church Council.

**To ensure all necessary arrangements are in order for the worship services, on Sundays and at special occasions. *(You will probably share many of these tasks with others.)***

- Ensure all arrangements are in place for welcoming the congregation at Sunday services. *(For example by liaising with the person responsible for organising the Welcome Stewards.)*
- Ensure stewarding for special services is in place.
- Ensure arrangements have been made for lifting the offering at Sunday and special services.
- Ensure that music leaders and organists charged with contributing to the praise are advised about the practices that are appropriate in your congregation.
- Ensure arrangements are in place for Baptisms and the Lord's Supper. *(For example by liaising with the Communion Steward).*
- Receive announcements and make the announcements during the service. . Accompany and pray with the minister, local preacher or guest speaker in the vestry prior to the service.

**To support and encourage the minister and congregation in the development of the work of God**

- Be available to work with the ordained and lay leaders in moving forward and prayerfully promoting the mission of Christ for your local Church.
- Encourage the minister to take a sabbatical when appropriate.
- Encourage and support the minister to participate in the Accompanied Self-Appraisal Scheme.
- Nurture new and potential leaders.
- Encourage the congregation to speak well of one another and the minister.
- Be sensitive to anxieties and issues within the congregation and assess if these need to be passed onto the minister or Church Council.

*Please note that these responsibilities may need to be adapted to suit your local situation and that there may be others you wish to add.*

## Property Steward

### Appointed for a three year period

**To convene and oversee the Property Task Group in your Church (*this group will help you to carry out all the aspects of your job description*)**

- Encourage nurture and prayerfully support the other members of this Property Group to view yourselves as the 'doorkeepers in the House of the Lord.'
- Attend regular Church Council meetings and report to it on behalf of the Property Task Group.
- Be aware of how the mission of your Church is reflected in the buildings.

### **To be responsible for the Church premises**

- Arrange the lighting, heating, and cleaning of Church premises, including employment of a cleaner/caretaker.
- Arrange the opening, closing and security of the Church premises.
- Arrange for the proper maintenance of Church premises.
- Oversee all use of Church premises and letting if appropriate.
- Liaise, via the Circuit Executive, with the District Home Mission Committee and District Property Board regarding any structural alteration or sale, if appropriate.
- Prepare relevant reports for the visiting Commission every five years.

### **To cooperate with the Circuit Manse Steward on matters relating to any manse attached to your Society**

- Be aware of the current Manse regulations. (*Manual of Laws and updates in 2005 Minutes of Conference, from page 119.*)
- Liaise with the Circuit Manse Steward who has responsibility for all manses on the Circuit.
- Serve on the Circuit Manse Group if requested.

***Please note that these responsibilities may need to be adapted to suit your local situation and that there may be others you wish to add.***

## Manse Steward

### **To report to the Circuit Executives it has the responsibility for all manses on your Circuit**

- Convene and lead a Circuit Manse Group to oversee the manses and help you carry out all the aspects of your job description. (*Some of the Society Property Stewards may serve on this.*)
- Attend regular Circuit Executive meetings and report on behalf of the Circuit Manse Group.
- Keep up to date with Manse regulations and ensure that they are correctly followed. (*Manual of Laws and updates in 2005 Minutes of Conference, from page 119.*)

### **To be responsible for the proper maintenance of manse properties on your Circuit**

- Arrange and accompany the annual inspection of manse property.
- Ensure that manses are kept structurally sound and well decorated, by organising ongoing maintenance under the authority of the Circuit Executive.

- Prepare and submit grant applications via the District Home Mission Secretary for financial help in repairing, refurbishing or purchasing manses, if necessary.

**To assist an outgoing minister in preparing the manse for a new minister's family**

- Ensure that the Conference-approved check-list of manse furniture and accommodation requirements is followed. (*Obtained from the Home Mission Department.*)

**To be responsible for any vacant manses on your Circuit**

- Liaise with the Property Board of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- Follow the rules for the letting of manses. (*2005 Minutes of Conference, page 200.*)

*Please note that these responsibilities may need to be adapted to suit your local situation and that there may be others you wish to add.*

## **Circuit Steward**

**Appointed for a three year period**

**To provide support to the Superintendent of the Circuit**

- Be the official lay representative of the Circuit at civic and other appropriate occasions.
- Advise the Superintendent and take a pastoral and prayerful interest in his/her work, life and, where appropriate, family.
- Encourage the Superintendent to be involved in the Accompanied Self-Appraisal Scheme, enquire how it is going and encourage positive developments.
- Encourage the Superintendent to take a Sabbatical when appropriate.

**To be a member of the Circuit Executive**

- Attend regular Circuit Executive meetings.
- Carry out the responsibilities and duties of the Circuit Executive as led down in the Manual of Laws. (*2005 Minutes of Conference, pp 34-36.*)
- Represent the Circuit at the District Synod.

**To support the ministers, their families and the Society Stewards on the Circuit**

- Pray for the ministers on the Circuit and their families.
- Attend events and services in the different Societies on the Circuit.
- Have an overview of the atmosphere, the people and the worship in the different Societies on the Circuit.
- Use this overview to advise and guide discussion at Circuit Executives and Circuit Meetings.

**To consult with the District Stationer on the appointment of a minister to the Circuit**

- Be sensitive and prayerful in your consultations with the District Stationer and the other members of the group set up by the Circuit Executive to discuss a change of minister.
- Use your knowledge of the Circuit to advise this group.
- Assist in planning a briefing for the incoming minister once the final Stationing list is published in February.
- Make a request for an extension of a minister's service beyond eight years, if appropriate, as per the procedures led down in the Manual of Laws. (*Manual of Laws, chapter 4, paragraph 32.*)

*Please note that these responsibilities may need to be adapted to suit your local situation and that there may be others you wish to add.*

# Church Treasurer

## Appointed for a three year period

### To be responsible to the Church Council for all financial income, for its proper use or transmission, as directed

- Receive and account for the offerings at Sunday services, and other services where appropriate.
- Pay bills, such as light, heat, insurance, and general running expenses.
- Make your Church's contribution, at least quarterly via the Circuit Treasurer, to Circuit expenses such as: ministers' stipend and allowances; the agreed contribution to the Comprehensive Assessment; and contributions to Connexional funds, such as Child Care, or World Development.
- When necessary submit grant applications via the Circuit Executive, e.g. to the Home Mission Department.
- Liaise closely with the Circuit Manse Steward to ensure your Society's manse is refurbished and maintained to the standard set by Conference.
- Ensure all the Church organisations submit their accounts to you for annual audit.
- Maintain accurate Church Accounts, along with Trust and Investment Accounts when appropriate, and submit these for annual audit.

### To convene and oversee the Finance Task Group in your Church

- Oversee and support the work of other members of this Finance Group, such as the Gift Aid and Freewill Offering Secretaries.
- Report financial recommendations and other decisions of the Finance Group to the Church Council.

As the Finance Group, together you will do the following-

- Agree financial recommendations to ensure the smooth running of your Church.
- Plan and prepare an annual budget for the Church, where appropriate
- Prepare grant applications for approval by the Circuit Executive.
- Contribute to the growth in discipleship of members of the congregation by helping them to understand that offering our money is part of our offering of ourselves to God.
- Ensure that the congregation is kept informed of financial decisions and recommendations on a regular basis; so they can understand that their contributions are crucial to God's work through the Church.
- Work to cultivate and encourage the Biblical principle of tithing among the congregation.

*Please note that these responsibilities may need to be adapted to suit your local situation and that there may be others you wish to add.*

## **Circuit Treasurer**

### **Appointed for a three year period**

#### **To be responsible to the Circuit Executive for all financial income, for its proper use or transmission**

- Receive contributions from Societies towards: ministers' stipends and allowances; the agreed contribution to the Comprehensive Assessment; and contributions to Connexional funds, such as Child Care and World Development.
- Pay to the Trustees Office monies required for the payment of stipends and other commitments.
- Transmit Circuit contributions to the Comprehensive Assessment and Connexional funds.
- Liaise with the Manse Steward and pay rent, rates and other agreed maintenance expenses of ministers' residences.
- Keep accurate accounts and submit these for annual audit.

#### **To be a member of the Circuit Executive**

- Attend regular Circuit Executive meetings and report on the Circuit's financial situation as appropriate.
- Carry out the responsibilities and duties of the Circuit Executive as led down in the Manual of Laws. (*2005 Minutes of Conference, pp 34-36.*)

*Please note that these responsibilities may need to be adapted to suit your local situation and that there may be others you wish to add.*

# **Church Council Secretary**

## **Appointed for a three year period**

### **To ensure that meetings of the Church Council are properly called**

- Issue notices of meetings in writing and separate from Minutes which may be circulated at the same time.
- Try to ensure that members receive their written notice at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
- If yours is a small congregation where everyone forms the Church Council, you can give the notice by a pulpit announcement at least a week in advance.

### **To prepare the agenda for meetings of the Church Council**

- Liaise with the Chairperson who will usually be the minister but from time to time may be another Church Council member appointed by the minister.
- Receive regular written reports from the Task Groups.
- Copy these written reports to members of the Church Council prior to the meeting, when appropriate. *(Reports from Task Groups do not need to be received at every meeting.)*
- When appropriate invite people who have been requested to make a report about specific tasks to which they were appointed. *(These might include Pastoral Visitors, Youth Workers, Home, Overseas or MWI Secretaries.)*

### **To minute the proceedings of the Church Council**

- Record only the decisions made by the Church Council and include any significant points the members feel are essential to the minute, but not a word by word account.
- Keep records in a Minute Book for future reference.
- Ensure minutes are agreed by the Church Council and signed by the Chairperson.

### **To manage correspondence**

- To receive correspondence on behalf of the Church Council.
- To correspond on behalf of the Church Council as directed
- In consultation with the minister to receive correspondence from different Connexional departments and bring it to the attention of the Church Council.
- Liaise and cooperate with those in the congregation who already receive information from Various Connexional departments to ensure information and business is brought to the attention of the Church Council.

### **To act as Secretary of the Congregational Meeting**

- Record main points made in the review of the previous year and the suggestions made for future worship and witness.
- Record names of those elected to the Church Council.
- Record the ratification of the officials nominated by the minister.

### **To assist in good communication between the Church Council and the congregation**

- Encourage the Church Council to inform the congregation regularly of any decisions made.
- Assist in the sharing of this information.
- Note questions or comments made by members of the congregation during Congregational Meetings and when Church Council decisions are being shared, and ensure they are brought to the attention of the Church Council.

***Please note that these responsibilities may need to be adapted to suit your local situation and that there may be others you wish to add.***

# **Circuit Secretary**

**Appointed for a three year period**

## **To arrange meetings of the Circuit Executive**

- Liaise with the Circuit Superintendent and prepare the agenda for meetings.
- Issue notices of meetings in writing in good time.
- Record only the decisions made and any significant points raised during the proceedings; have these minutes agreed and ensure the minutes are signed by the Circuit Superintendent.

## **To arrange meetings of the Circuit Meeting**

- Liaise with the Circuit Superintendent and prepare the agenda for meetings.
- Record the main points made in the discussion of the work of God on the Circuit.

## **To manage correspondence for the Circuit**

- Receive correspondence on behalf of the Circuit Executive. . To correspond on behalf of the Circuit Executive as directed.

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