

So, you're thinking of becoming a warden



If you are considering standing for the role of a warden, you may have a number of questions about the position. This document outlines a warden's key roles and responsibilities, as well as how to access more detailed information.

But first of all, thank you for your willingness to consider serving in this way. Wardens play a significant part in the health and good governance of our churches, and of the Diocese as a whole.

It is our prayer that should you be elected at the AGM, your time as a warden will be a blessing not only to God's people, but to you also. May you be inspired by the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who himself took "the very nature of a servant".

Brief overview of responsibilities

Whereas the senior minister is responsible for the spiritual wellbeing of the church, the wardens' responsibilities are more practical or administrative in nature – generally relating to the church's property and finances. These include (but are not limited to):

- The maintenance, security and good order of church property and grounds, including heritage considerations where relevant.
- Granting licences for non-church groups to use church property subject to appropriate conditions.
- Ensuring appropriate financial administration of all money and property of the church, including procedures for collecting and recording offertories and keeping proper accounting records.
- Taking out any required insurance for paid parish workers beyond those policies already administered by the Property Trust.
- Preparing financial statements and accounts, having them audited and providing them to the church's AGM.
- Convening annual and other general meetings in conjunction with the senior minister.

Wardens are also responsible for a number of obligations that arise from State or Federal laws, including in the areas of:

- Employment relations
- Work health and safety
- Child protection
- Taxation

[NOTE: If your parish consists of more than one church, there will be some minor differences and/or additional responsibilities. Please refer to the [Parish Administration Ordinance 2008](#) for more detail.]

You're not alone

The good news is you don't have to perform all of these activities yourself! While you are responsible for ensuring these (and other) things happen, you can arrange for others to carry them out on your behalf. This will be particularly important for wardens of larger churches.

One of the functions that is regularly delegated is the role of **treasurer**. If one of the wardens is not willing to act in this role, they may appoint another (appropriately qualified) person to act as treasurer with the approval of the senior minister.

The [Parish Finance](#) page of the SDS website includes detailed guidance on the treasurer's accounting and reporting responsibilities, along with a number of helpful forms, templates and FAQs to make the job easier.

Remember that every other church in the Diocese has wardens too, many of whom have filled the role for many years (if not decades!). There is a wealth of experience amongst this group in dealing with many of the issues you will come across.

Decision making process

Each church (or parish if administered as a whole) has three wardens and, ideally, decisions will be made unanimously. However, if one warden is unavailable or disagrees, a decision may still be made by the remaining two.

The parish council is responsible for determining matters of policy. So, if the parish council has adopted a policy on some matter, the wardens will need to operate within that policy (e.g. counting and banking the offertory, or licensing use of the hall to community groups).

The parish council is also responsible for approving the budget and authorising payments. Therefore, the wardens will also need to carry out their financial responsibilities within the limits set by the parish council.

So, while the wardens are responsible for ensuring many important things take place, most significant decisions will, in practice, be made in conjunction with the senior minister and the parish council – both of which will hopefully prove to be a wonderful source of godly wisdom, experience and expertise as you collaborate on a whole range of matters.

Parish of Figtree expectations

In deciding to stand as a candidate for warden for the Parish of Figtree, you are:

- indicating your willingness to make a three-year commitment to the role
- are available and willing to co-lead, alongside a Ministry Team member, a Ministry Area Team (a sub-committee of parish council)
- Promising to observe appropriate confidentiality especially with information of a sensitive nature, and
- Signalling your intention to make the journey with us into a new (and developing) model of parish governance.

When you finish up

Most wardens will finish their tenure when they decide to step down and a successor is subsequently elected or appointed.

However, there are a number of other circumstances under which you would cease to be a warden, including for example becoming: insolvent, mentally ill or incapable, a paid employee of the parish or church, or convicted of certain offences.

For more information

This document is intended as an overview only. You should consult the [Parish Administration Ordinance 2008](#) for more extensive and detailed information. The [SDS website](#) also contains lots of information that will help you understand the role of a warden.

And, of course, we encourage you to chat with someone who is either a current warden within the Parish of Figtree or has recently served in the role.

Once again, thank you for your willingness to consider serving in this way and may God guide and bless you in your decision-making.