

Appropriate Governance and Safeguarding

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, *forms of assistance, forms of leadership*, various kinds of tongues. (emphasis added).

1 Cor 12:27-28 (NRSV)

Our churches should be safe places for all children, young people and adults; and a loving community that it is easy to be part of because all the administration is in place to make sure that church is welcoming and safe. A safe church is the 'fruit' of good governance; and good governance requires good administration and some organisation.

Administration is a spiritual gift. We often think that it can't be and fail to see the role it has in building the kingdom of God and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The phrase 'forms of assistance' emphasised in the above verses, as well as being translated in that way, can be translated as 'kinds of administrative support'.

Sometimes administration in the church can feel frustrating: primarily because it feels like it ought to be less important than mission and ministry, but it seems as if 'the institution' deems it as being most pressing – and it certainly feels as if it can take up much of our time! This was an issue right from the beginning of the Church, and Acts 6.1-6 shows that there was a response of help offered - administrative help - in response to the growing needs of mission and ministry.

If that seems like a reach, then the phrase 'forms of leadership' emphasised in the verses above, as well as being translated in this way, can be translated as 'ability to formulate strategies' and is sometimes translated as 'administration'. The original Greek word used, when used in the singular, is normally translated as 'leadership'; it recalls the work of a pilot at the rudder of a boat – taking it in the direction agreed upon by the captain.

In short, one of those two words in the original Greek – and maybe both of them – seems to imply some kind of administration and governance. Therefore, in this list of some very spiritual gifts, there is not only a place, but a necessity for help and support that enables ministry and mission to happen well, efficiently and safely.

A safe church is the fruit of good governance, it is that simple.

There were, of course, nowhere near the number of rules and regulations around safeguarding, good governance of charity, Church Representation rules, or Health and Safety documents at the time that Paul wrote his letter to the Church in Corinth (they had much larger and more apparent problems). Nonetheless, in order for a parish church and/or benefice to engage effectively in its mission and ministry there are some legal requirements that must be met, some structures in the Church of England that must be met, and practices and administrative structures (contact lists, notes to send cards on anniversary of baptisms, the ability to bulk email newsletters, etc.) that will make mission and ministry much simpler.

There follows some helpful hints that will remind you of the governance that is necessary and give you a starting point for further information. This list is not comprehensive (this is a very large and sometimes complex area - but should give you a 'starter for 10' for each of the areas covered and a

next step in terms of where to go next for greater detail that will address your particular issue or circumstance.

Safeguarding and governance are not areas to be unsure of, so with any of these aspects please do ask questions of the relevant officers, who are all more than happy to respond and advise you and your church.

Safeguarding:

- Begin with the parish safeguarding handbook. This should, at the very least, be read by the incumbent and the parish safeguarding officer. The parish safeguarding handbook is available here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>
- All the documents you need for good safeguarding are listed on the dashboard. This is a brilliant tool that will ensure your church does everything necessary to keep people safe: <https://www.parishdashboards.org.uk/auth/login>
- The diocesan safeguarding pages including contact information for the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, as well as details of the training courses offered: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding/>

Governance – PCCs, APCMs and Charities

- Good governance checklist here: <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/GovernanceChecklist.pdf>
- Meetings and APCMs etc info is here: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/apcm-er/>
- The forms for electoral rolls, APCM and PCCs can be found here: <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/pccs/apcms/>
- All PCC members are trustees and you may have other trusts in your parish too: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/charity-trustees/>
- Parish officers have specific areas of responsibility – this page gives information and help: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/parish-officers/>
- Useful advice on running good PCC meetings can be found here – and we have copied you can borrow in the Diocesan Office: <https://www.cpas.org.uk/browse-everything/pcc-tonight-printed>
- Every year each parish is visited by their Archdeacon or her/his representative in the form of the Area Dean or another member of clergy. Here's a page on what to expect and how to prepare: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/archdeacons-visitations/>
- The Parish Resources website is invaluable in the area of governance and administration and has lots of useful information: <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/>
- Life Events diary: <https://lifeeventsdiary.org/> Log your funerals, baptisms and weddings to help with the administration of life events, and also reminders of when to send anniversary cards etc.

GDPR:

- The diocesan webpages have useful information here: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/data-protection/>
- GDPR checklist here: <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/GDPRchecklist.pdf>
- GDPR resources including privacy notice etc: <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/gdpr/>

Buildings

Halls:

For information on letting halls please see:

- <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/hiring-church-halls/>
- <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/hiring-out-premises/>

Churches:

Any changes in churches, either removing things or adding things, need permission. The type of permission can vary depending on the size, scale and scope of the work involved.

- All alterations need formal approval from the Diocesan Advisory Committee - <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/dac/> there are lots of helpful documents here that will help steer your decisions and advise on the levels of permission you need. If in doubt please make give us a call or email.
- National Church page on care for the buildings: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare>
- It is also essential that each churchyard has a plan of burials that can be cross referenced with the burial register.
- Buildings need insurance too: <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/church/>
- Risk assessments and health and safety guidance and policies: https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/?q=&facet_audience=35083&facet_dateMonth=&facet_dateYear=
- Each church is expected and required to have a quinquennial inspection by their architect – advice on this is here: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/dac/quinquennial-inspectors/>
- Repairs, maintenance and grants information is here: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/dac/repairs-maintenance-grants/>

Administration:

- The diocesan website has a link for all PCC officers <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/parish-officers/>
- Useful administrative information here: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/secretaries-and-administrators/>

- We highly recommend the work of John Truscott in all things administrative – he generously provides free downloadable resources on everything from running meetings, to organization, to APCMs, budget, vision and many more: <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/>

Finances

There is a variety of expectations and legalities around good financial governance. The diocese runs regular training for treasurers and is always happy to take your call or email. There are web pages outlining the requirements for statutory fees, a church's charitable status and quarterly returns. Ecclesiastical insurance also outlines useful advice for good practice with handling cash and cheques.

For further support in giving and stewardship please see the Resourcing Mission booklet.

- Diocesan support for treasurers including information about returns, fees and charitable status: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/finance/>
- Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers: <https://www.acat.uk.com/>
- Ecclesiastical Insurance financial advice: <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice/>

Helpful Books for Further Reference

Church Representation Rules 2020, Church of England, Church House Publishing, 2019 (Also available for free online)

The Vicar's Guide: Life and Ministry in the Parish, David Ison (ed.), Church House Publishing, 2008

A Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors, K.M. MacMorran & T. Briden, Continuum, 2002

Your Church and the Law: A simple explanation and guide, David Parrott, Canterbury Press, 2008

The PCC Member's Essential Guide, Mark Tanner, Church House Publishing, 2015

Churchwardens: A Survival Guide, Martin Dudley, SPCK, 2009

An ABC for the PCC: A Handbook for Church Council Members, John Pitchford, Mowbray, 2008