



To
**Churchwardens in Bedfordshire
Archdeaconry**
Those receiving Churchwarden mailings
Copied to clergy and PCC Secretaries for info

The Venerable Dave Middlebrook
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Date March 2023

Dear Churchwardens

Election of Churchwardens for 2023-24, and Visitation Services

Thank you for all that you have done in the last year as you and your church family have continued to cope with the many challenges that have been placed on us all. I am so very thankful for your commitment to your communities and for the support you have given to your clergy.

I hope you have seen an email sent out (15th December 2022) by David White, our Diocesan Secretary. The email reminded everyone of the various procedures relating to the preparation of the Electoral Roll, the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and the returns which need to be made after the meeting. This letter relates to part of that annual process, the election of Churchwardens. The letter and attached information can be found [here](#).

In 2023, Annual Parishioners Meeting (APM), and Annual Parish Church Meetings (APCM), must now happen with people physically present with one another (they can no longer be held online) and it is my hope that you will be able to do so in your parish.

When you hold your parish annual meetings you will of course be electing your Churchwardens for 2023-2024 which has to be carried out every year even if the current Churchwardens remain in post. At that meeting, the Certificate of Election (of Churchwardens) should be completed and signed by the PCC Chair, or lay chair if in vacancy.

A blank Certificate for 2023 is attached to this email; the completed and signed form should be scanned or photographed and a copy returned to my colleague Tricia Reed **within 7 days** of the meeting, via email to archdbedpa@stalbans.anglican.org. If this is not possible, please send the original documents to Tricia Reed, Archdeacon of Bedford's Office, 17 Lansdowne Road, Luton LU3 1EE. There is no need to send hard copies of documents if you have managed to send them electronically. Without this information we cannot update the diocesan database.

During the last two years, through the pandemic, we have necessarily changed the process for admitting Churchwardens into office, but this year we are returning to the practice of the Archdeacon admitting Churchwardens at a choice of three Visitation Services. Do please make every attempt to attend one of these services in order to ensure that you are able to carry out your role as Churchwarden.

Continued overleaf...

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You will be sent a separate email inviting you to register for one of these three options:

- St Mary's Luton on Tuesday 11th July at 3pm
- St Edmunds or St James' Blunham on Saturday 15th July at 10am
- St Andrews' Bedford on Wednesday 26th July at 7.30pm

When you attend one of these services, you will be asked to sign a certificate of declaration and take an oath with all the other Churchwardens attending. If you have not experienced being admitted at a Visitation Service, I commend it to you as it is a powerful expression of service and faith. We will also offer light refreshments and an opportunity for you to meet informally someone from Emma Critchley's team who help with applications to the DAC, as well as someone from our Flourishing Churches Team, and Historic Churches representatives.

Throughout this year we are aiming to provide training to Churchwardens. The next online churchwardens training will be "Help I'm a (new) Churchwarden" and the dates for your diary are: 19th and 24th July. This is aimed primarily at new churchwardens but will be a helpful reminder for long-standing and other churchwardens too so please put one of the dates in your diary and further details will be coming out in due course. We also plan to offer information forums to help churches work towards greener practices on 14th and 23rd November. More details to follow.

Thank you again for all that you do and please don't hesitate to contact Tricia or myself if you have any questions regarding this process, and, if you are stepping down as Churchwarden, please pass this email onto whoever will be taking your place.

God bless,



Venerable Dave Middlebrook
Archdeacon of Bedford