

A Churchwarden looks back

*As his (extended!) time as a Churchwarden comes to a close,
Richard Toyn reflects on what is involved.*

The official duties of a churchwarden are to maintain a terrier (register) of all lands, and an inventory of all articles appertaining to the church; to maintain order in the church and churchyard; and to receive and ensure the safe keeping of collection monies until handed over to the treasurer.

In practice, these duties can only be performed with the help of many members of the church. Hence, the real day-to-day role of a churchwarden is a co-ordination role – listening, advising and guiding.

Fortunately, All Saints' is blessed with a number of very active groups within the congregation who provide and maintain an environment that supports collective worship, prayer and fellowship.

On a weekly basis, the two churchwardens aim to ensure that the scheduled church services are appropriately supported by service material (e.g. orders of service), and people (e.g. Sidesmen, Lesson Readers and Chalice Servers).

Regularly, the churchwardens, on behalf of the PCC, discuss with members of the church maintenance team problems discovered and maintenance activities undertaken.

The churchwardens along with the elected Deanery Synod representatives are members of the PCC, with the PCC meeting about eight times each year.

Annually, the churchwardens check and record the current state of the church buildings and articles – church plate, furniture, fixtures and fittings, prayer and hymn books.

The churchwardens are the officers of the bishop, and it is their duty, when requested annually by the Archdeacon, to supply information about the church and parish.

During the period of a Vacancy, like recently, between the retirement of Revd Bill Kemm, and the installation of the Revd Jo Loveridge, the churchwardens are charged with the responsibility of scheduling the church services and arranging appropriate clergy and lay members to lead each service.

At All Saints', a churchwarden is selected to serve for a four year term, with election occurring every year; with a new churchwarden being selected every two years.

Each year, both churchwardens are required to attend a church service along with other churchwardens, at which the Archdeacon delivers 'his' visitation 'charge' – identifying key aspects that the churchwardens need to consider over the coming year.

The variety of activities and interactions undertaken, throughout the year, by a churchwarden are rewarding, with something being achieved every week.

