

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

TEMPLATE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VESTRIES

Introduction

Individuals serving on Vestries are appointed in accordance with the constitution of the church normally by the congregation at the Annual General Meeting. The exception to this is the Rector's Warden who is appointed solely by the rector. Not all charges have Church Wardens. Vestry members are viewed as the leaders of the congregation and should behave as such.

General Principles

1. Canon 60 sets out specific canonical duties of the Vestry. In addition, because Vestry members comprise the charity trustees of the church, they must comply with charity law. Guidance for Vestry responsibilities is available from the SEC website: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/vestry-resources/vestry-responsibilities/>
2. Vestry members should familiarise themselves with their charge's/congregation's constitution regarding the duties of Vestry members.
3. Individuals appointed to the Vestry have a duty to act in the best interests of the charge/ congregation and should expect to devote a reasonable amount of time to the work of the Vestry and to attend meetings regularly.
4. All members of the Vestry have a duty to take decisions solely in the interests of the charge/congregation and must not act for personal gain or financial or other material benefit for themselves or friends and family.
5. All members must declare any interests that could impinge upon their decision making and not participate in decision making on any matters in which they have a personal interest.
6. Vestry members are accountable to the charge/congregation and the wider church for their decisions and actions.
7. Vestry members must be made aware that policies and procedures agreed by the Scottish Episcopal Church apply to all charges/ congregations.
8. Vestry members are stewards of the charge's/congregation's assets, be they financial or material.
9. Vestry members may be recipients of confidential information and must respect and comply with the requirement to maintain that confidentiality.
10. Vestry members must take seriously and understand the need to be active in the care and wellbeing of their clergy and be willing to offer support as needed.
11. Clergy time off should be fully respected and contact during any period of time off should only be made in emergencies. Vestry should encourage members of the congregation to do the same.

12. Vestry members should discuss openly with their clergy the expectations that they have and ensure that these expectations are not unreasonable.
13. All Vestry members should complete a Fit and Proper person's declaration and undergo safeguarding training regularly. Where necessary Vestry members should seek and pay due regard to Safeguarding advice.
14. In all their dealings, Vestry members should conduct themselves appropriately with the courtesy and respect with which they themselves would expect to be treated. Behaviour which constitutes bullying or harassment will not be tolerated.
15. Vestry members must respect decisions made at Vestry meetings even if it is a decision with which they did not agree.