



# Holy Trinity Devonport

## Vestry and its members

The Vestry is part of the formal structures of governance of the Anglican Church of New Zealand (ACNZ) and is the parish arm of ACNZ's synodical system of government, which is collaborative and representative.

"The initiation, conduct and development of the work the Church...shall be the shared responsibility of [Vestry] and clergy working in partnership."

The Ministry Statute 2013 states the role of Vestry is:

- a. to promote the worship of God, and to provide all things that are necessary for the ordering of public worship;
- b. to enable ministry to be provided to and by members of the Parish;
- c. to take counsel together for the fostering of spiritual growth of and well-being of the members of the Parish and of all persons within the area of the Parish; and
- d. to promote and, subject to Church Law and the rights of the Bishop, to have responsibility for all matters affecting the governance, finance, administration and property of the Parish.

### Formal Duties of Vestry

1. Church Buildings—maintenance and repair of the church buildings, church grounds and movables, arranging insurance, etc.
2. Financial affairs of the parish—present the Annual Report and Accounts, present the annual budget, Employment of paid staff, etc.
3. Ensure that a range of policies are implemented and reviewed annually: Health and Safety, Data Protection, Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, etc.
4. Review other policies: Baptism preparation, Marriage preparation, etc.

Vestry's formal role, therefore, is of oversight, helping guide the direction of the ministry of the parish, and of compliance with certain legal requirements.

### Membership of Vestry

1. Ex-officio Members (by right of office)
  - Clergy licensed to the parish.
  - Vicar's Warden (appointed by the Vicar)

- People's Warden (elected by the AGM).
- Representatives of the General or Diocesan Synod on the electoral roll of the parish. The parish can elect up to 2 Diocesan Synod reps.

## 2. Elected Members—elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The parish can elect between 3-15 members, the number to be determined by each AGM immediately before holding the election. Elected members must be baptised and enrolled members of the Parish. There is no age restriction.

## The role of a Vestry member

Vestry needs to monitor the practical outworking of the church's mission. It therefore needs to keep the mission and ministry of the whole church under review, and to make sure that the parish undertakes all those activities, and only those activities which reflect its purpose and vision, and in a manner which reflects its agreed values. Vestry should give time to review the practice of the church in every area, including:

- Children's and youth work
- Safeguarding children (0-18) and vulnerable adults
- Social action e.g. to those affected by divorce, debt, addiction
- Support for the family – marriage, parenting etc.
- Support for the elderly and sick
- Appropriate pastoral care
- Christian education and training
- Support for global mission
- Prayer
- Worship
- Evangelism in the parish and beyond
- Christian unity across congregations and denominations

## What are the expectations of Vestry members?

Vestry members ought to be aligned to the church's mission, vision and values and collaborate to see this worked out in practice. At a recent Vestry away day, Vestry agreed to conduct itself according to the following values:

**Respect:** To commit to attending meetings, which are in person at 7:30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month; to submit reports on time if required to write one, and to read all papers relating to the meeting. To speak knowing that words are powerful.

**Trust:** To speak honestly and without fear, and to listen carefully to understand others' point of view. To show 100% honesty in meetings and then display 100% loyalty to the decisions Vestry makes collectively.

**Integrity:** To maintain confidentiality and to live in a way that is consistent with what we say.

**Christlikeness:** To have a personal faith in Jesus. When someone makes a mistake to offer forgiveness and love. If conflicts take place publicly then reconciliation needs to happen publicly too.

In addition, a Vestry member can be reasonably expected to:

- Get to know the members of the church and when necessary, explain what Vestry does and why it may have made certain decisions.
- Try to promote understanding between members of the church who may have differing views and encourage dialogue.
- Listen to the church's ideas and concerns and pass them on to the churchwardens and clergy as appropriate.
- Set a spiritual example by attending, helping with, and encouraging others to attend Sunday services.
- Take an interest in regional, national, and global church affairs.

## **Accountability and Transparency**

Because most Vestry members are elected by the AGM, which is attended by members of the electoral roll, Vestry is accountable to the AGM for its decisions. This is why a summary of Vestry business for the whole year is reported by the Chairperson of Vestry at the AGM.

Vestry acts as a single body and no one member is liable for its debts or decisions. However, Vestry should always act in good faith, taking appropriate advice and making its decisions with due care. Despite changes to its membership, Vestry is a continuing body, and all decisions of a previous Vestry (subject to any contrary decision) are binding on the Parish and any subsequent Vestry.

Vestry members promise to uphold the doctrine expressed in the Apostles' Creed, abide by the doctrines, practices, and regulations of the Anglican Church, as well as the authority of the courts of the Church, including Diocesan and General Synods. Members are required to sign a declaration of submission to the General Synod of the Church, prior to taking office.

## **Subcommittees**

Vestry may decide to appoint sub-committees to take responsibility for some areas of church life such as buildings or finance. These sub-committees are accountable to Vestry and must have clear lines of communication to Vestry. Vestry can dissolve any sub-committee at any time. The Vicar has a right to sit on any sub-committee and a representative of Vestry must be present at any sub-committee meeting.

## **Secretary and Treasurer**

The Secretary and Treasurer must be different people and do not need to be members of Vestry.

The Secretary, in general maintains written records and minutes of all meetings of the Governing Body and all General Meetings, acts as Secretary to the Ministry Unit and Governing Body and at all General Meetings, and carries out such other administrative duties and responsibilities as directed by the Chairperson and Governing Body.

The Treasurer is the contact person for the Diocesan Council in relation to the Ministry Unit's finances and carry out such work in relation to those finances as the Diocesan Council may require as part of the Consolidated Accounting Procedures, provides the Governing Body with advice on financial matters as and when required and assists the Governing Body in carrying out any of its financial obligations under Church Law.

## **Time Commitment as Vestry Member**

Generally, 2 to 3 hours per month (except January) for Vestry meetings and pre-reading of reports for the meeting. There may be other work to undertake in between meetings and certain ad hoc requirements such as attending special services, away days, and Vestry gatherings.

**If you'd like to speak to someone about becoming a member of Vestry, any of the current members would be happy to hear from you.**