

The Church of England
Guild of Vergers



National Constitution

August 2019



Leading the way since 1932
Presidents: The Archbishops of Canterbury and York

Name: _____

Branch: _____

Region: _____

Date of Joining: _____

THE VERGER'S PRAYER

Almighty Father,
from whom every family in heaven and earth is named,
who has called us into the fellowship of your Church,
grant, we pray, that in all our churches
we may fulfil the duties
and enjoy the privileges of our spiritual home.
And on those who offer themselves for service
as vergers in the house of God
bestow the fullness of your grace,
that, united in love to you and to one another,
we may show forth your glory
and hasten the coming of your kingdom.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND GUILD OF VERGERS

Founded 1932

CONSTITUTION

I. THE GUILD

- I.1 The Church of England Guild of Vergers (“the Guild”) is a **Fellowship** in Christ within the Anglican Communion to which all who serve in the office of Verger may belong, whether salaried or not, full or part-time, honorary, voluntary or retired. The Guild also welcomes applications from all those who perform similar duties with another (or no) title, who give their services and talents in the ordering of worship and the care of church buildings.
- I.2 The Guild seeks to make effective the ministry of Vergers through the following key **objectives**, by:
- I.2.1 Promoting the spiritual nature of the **Vergers’ Vocation** through Christian Fellowship and spiritual guidance for all its Members;
 - I.2.2 Encouraging the advancement of knowledge by **education**, through maintaining standards of good practice, and by equipping Members for Ministry as vergers in all its aspects, through the provision of advice, training, resources and by organising and promoting training courses and conferences;
 - I.2.3 Providing the means and opportunity for **communication** and discussion of ideas and proposals of common interest to Members;
 - I.2.4 Providing **support** and encouragement to the Membership in all aspects of their duties whatever they may be and wherever performed;
 - I.2.5 **Advising**, upon request, and making recommendations as to terms of employment and welfare of any Member;
 - I.2.6 **Recording** the gamut of work undertaken by Vergers; in addition noting each Member’s training, experience and qualifications.
- I.3 In order to achieve these objectives the Guild will:
- I.3.1 Raise by **subscription** from its Members the funds required to administer the Guild.
 - I.3.2 Promote Funds of **Benevolence** for Guild Members, the funds to be financed from the contributions of its members;
 - I.3.3 Engage such persons as required by the Guild, upon such terms and conditions as the Executive Committee may require, to **advise** on and further the work of the Guild.

1.4 The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, by virtue of office, are invited to be **Joint Presidents** of the Guild.

1.5 The Guild is not a Trade Union as defined by section 1 of the *Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992*, (or any subsequent amendment or re-enactment thereof).

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE GUILD

2.1.1 **Membership** of the Guild is open to all persons employed or occupied regularly, whether full or part-time, or as a voluntary verger, in:

a) Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury and the Church of England

b) Churches designated by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York under the Church of England's Ecumenical Canon B43

Definitions of these groups are available from the General Secretary.

2.1.2 Any person who is at least 18 years of age, engaged in similar duties but with a different (or no) title, who regularly gives their time and talents in the ordering of worship and/or the care of church buildings in the above churches, may apply for membership.

2.2 Full Membership

2.2.1 Any salaried, full or part-time, voluntary or retired Verger who is at least 18 years of age may apply to be a **Full Member** of the Guild.

2.3 Associate Membership

2.3.1 Any Verger who has not yet reached the age of 18 will be an **Associate Member** until their 18th birthday and thereafter a **Full Member**.

2.3.2 Any person of any age who is not a Verger but supports the aims and objects of the Guild may apply to be an **Associate Member** of the Guild.

2.3.3 Application for membership from persons belonging to churches other than those described in clause 2.1 may be considered for Associate Membership at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

2.4 No person shall be allowed to apply for any class of Membership other than Full Membership or Associate Membership. Full Members shall only **belong to one Branch** and pay subscriptions annually to that Branch. In addition, Full Members may apply for Associate membership of other Branches.

- 2.5 **Fellowship** of the Guild may be bestowed on any person who has significantly served the Guild or rendered exemplary service. Fellowship awards will be agreed by the Executive Committee. Fellows are encouraged to meet as a body from time to time. No subscriptions shall be due from any Fellow. The number of Fellows at any one time shall be at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
- 2.6 **Life Membership** of the Guild may be awarded by the Executive Committee on recommendation. No subscriptions shall be due from any Life Member. The number of Life Members at any one time shall be at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
- 2.7 Only **Full Members** of the Guild shall be **entitled to vote** on any resolution proposed at any Annual General Meeting duly convened under the terms of this Constitution.
- 2.8 Only **Full Members** of the Guild shall be entitled to stand **for election** to any office of the Guild specified in clause 3.1, save that the offices of General Secretary and National Treasurer may be occupied by either a Full or Associate member of the Guild, and the National Chaplain need not be a member.

3. ORGANISATION OF THE GUILD

The Guild is organised on a national and a local level.

3.1 National Administration

3.1.1 The Guild is administered by an **Executive Committee** which shall comprise:

- a) Chairman
- b) General Secretary
- c) Treasurer
- d) Legal Advisor (ex officio and non-voting)
- e) Training Officer
- f) Media Officer
- g) Welfare Officer
- h) National Membership Officer
- i) Overseas Membership Officer
- j) Chaplain (non-voting)
- k) Regional Representatives

- 3.1.2 of the Executive Committee a **Standing Committee** shall be formed and comprise:
- a) Chairman
 - b) General Secretary
 - c) Treasurer
 - d) Chaplain (non-voting)
 - e) Legal Advisor (ex officio and non-voting)
- 3.1.3 Other committees may be formed as required; these are covered in the Statutes (6) of the Guild.
- 3.1.4 Unless otherwise stated in the Statutes, all officers of the Guild shall be **nominated** for their appointment by the Branches of the Guild, and elected by the AGM and shall hold office for a term of three years, whereupon such appointment is renewable indefinitely.

3.2 **Local Administration**

The Guild shall be comprised, where possible, of **Branches**.

- 3.2.1 Branches will be established in locations where Membership numbers enable an effective organisation to be maintained.
- 3.2.2 Each Branch will elect a Chairman, a Treasurer, a Secretary and a Chaplain (see 3.2.5). Except in the case of Branch Chairmen (who shall be Full Members of the Guild), any Full or Associate Member of the Guild can stand for election as a Branch Officer.
- 3.2.3 **Fees**
National Capitation will be set by the Executive Committee and shall be at one rate for both memberships. Subscriptions due to individual Branches will be set locally.
- 3.2.4 **Branch Returns**
The Branch must provide a list of Members, their class of Membership of the Branch and their address & contact details to the General Secretary in accordance with the Guild's licence under the General Data Protection Regulations 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018 (or any subsequent amendment or re-enactment thereof), by the last day of March each year. They are also required to provide any information as requested by the General Secretary. Copies of the signed accounts and capitation are sent to the National Treasurer by the last day of March each year.

3.2.5 **Branch Chaplains**

Each Branch may appoint, in consultation with the Diocesan Bishop, a Branch Chaplain who will be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the Membership of that Branch, and who will liaise with the National Chaplain on all matters which affect the Guild at large. A Branch Chaplain must either be an ordained member of the Church of England, or in communion with the See of Canterbury and the Church of England.

3.2.6 **Branch Life Members**

Any Branch may honour any of its Full or Associate Members by appointing them as an **Honorary Member of that Branch**, at the level of membership that the Branch member holds at the time. Such appointments may be for life at the discretion of the Branch. The annual subscriptions due and payable by an Honorary Member shall be paid by the Branch making such appointment.

3.2.7 **Resolutions of any Branch**

All Resolutions passed by any Branch of the Guild must not be contrary to the National Constitution, and any significant Resolution must be notified to the General Secretary. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the National Chairman or General Secretary.

3.2.8 **Dissolution of any Branch**

If any Branch is dissolved all moneys and assets held by that Branch shall be delivered to the National Treasurer who will hold such moneys until such time as required. The National Treasurer will deliver to the appropriate Guild officer any assets to hold for as long as is required. Members of a dissolving Branch can either merge with a neighbouring Branch or opt to become a National Member.

4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

4.1 The Annual General Meeting of the Guild will be held at a convenient location usually immediately preceding the Annual Training Conference.

4.2 At the Annual General Meeting the Agenda shall include consideration and the adoption/receipt of:

- a) Executive Committee Reports;
- b) The examined accounts;
- c) Reports from National Officers (having been submitted to the General Secretary in writing upon request, for inclusion in the Annual General Meeting agenda).

The Annual General Meeting will also consider:

- d) Appointment of Office holders;
- e) Confirmation of Committee membership; and
- f) Venues of National Festivals (usually one in each Province).

- 4.3 Items for inclusion on the Annual General Meeting agenda should be with the General Secretary not less than 28 days before the date of the meeting. There will not be an item of “any other business” but provision will be made for an open forum which the National Officers will attend.
- 4.4 In exceptional circumstances an **Extraordinary General Meeting** of the Guild membership may be called by the General Secretary upon resolution of the Standing Committee, giving all Members 28 days notice.
5. EXAMINATION OF ACCOUNTS
The Annual General Meeting will appoint a suitably qualified Independent Examiner to scrutinise and comment on the Annual Accounts.
6. STATUTES
The Executive Committee may initiate Statutes to govern the operation of the Guild and the performance of its Officers. These must be ratified by a General Meeting and will be binding on the Membership. Statutes are contained in the Appendices.
7. DISCONTINUANCE OF MEMBERSHIP
If any Member, due to their conduct or action, brings discredit on the Guild then that person’s Membership may be discontinued by the Executive Committee, usually following recommendation from the Member’s principal Branch, such action being endorsed by the Annual General Meeting.
8. DISSOLUTION OF THE GUILD
In the event of dissolution being agreed by resolution at a General Meeting, National assets of the Guild shall be returned to the Branches in equal shares for distribution to nominated charities, or in the case where there are no surviving Branches to nominated charities as decided by the Executive Committee.
9. AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION
This Constitution shall be effective from August 2019. Alterations to any item may only be agreed at a General Meeting called for that purpose, with prior notice having been given at least four months previously to all Members.
10. ASSETS OF THE GUILD
The assets of the Guild shall be held jointly by the Officers of the Guild. The list of assets will be detailed at the Annual General Meeting.

11. LIABILITIES AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The Executive Committee, through the National Treasurer, will insure the Guild's physical assets, and those risks covered by legislation, with an appropriate insurance provider, and insure appropriate Guild officers or officials against accident whilst on Guild business. The Treasurer will also ensure that appropriate public liability and other relevant insurance cover is provided during Guild events. They will also pay the appropriate fees to the regulatory bodies to cover relevant Data Protection and other Legislation. The Executive Committee will endeavour to meet any other statutory regulations covering the work of the Guild.

12. ANY OTHER MATTERS

Any matters not covered by the above mentioned rules shall be referred to the next meeting of the Executive Committee for a decision and such decision shall be final.