

The Church of England

Guild of Vergers



# Hints & Tips for Branch Officers

*Regional Representative, Chairmen,  
Secretaries & Treasurers*



*Leading the way since 1932*

*Presidents: The Archbishops of Canterbury and York*

## CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	page 1
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	page 2
<b>REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE</b>	page 2
<b>FELLOWS</b>	page 3
<b>LIFE MEMBERSHIP</b>	page 3
<b>HONORARY BRANCH MEMBERSHIP</b>	page 4
<b>BRANCH CHAIRMAN</b>	page 4
<b>BRANCH SECRETARY</b>	page 4
<b>BRANCH TREASURER</b>	page 5
<b>TIPS FOR TREASURERS</b>	page 5
<b>FINANCIAL RECORDS</b>	page 6
<b>ACCOUNTS</b>	page 7
<b>FESTIVALS</b>	page 8
<b>EXPENSES</b>	page 9

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of **'Hints & Tips for Branch Officers ~ Regional Representative, Chairmen, Secretaries and Treasurers'** is to identify those aspects which are relative to these roles and to act as a guide, which it is hoped, will simplify and ease those duties which you undertook when accepting one or other of these positions.

The definitions of Membership, Fellows of the Guild, Life Members and Honorary Branch Members are quoted from the National Constitution. (It is possible for a member to belong to a Branch to which all annual subscriptions are paid, and to belong to another Branch where only a branch subscription is paid).

It is your responsibility to maintain accurate records and to submit all details as required by the National Constitution (and where relevant by your Branch's own Constitution) to the General Secretary who passes these on to the Executive Committee.

Also there are samples of an 'Interim Return' and Membership Forms are included.

There is a Corporate letterhead available, we would ask you to use this for all official matters, please contact the General Secretary's office for supplies.

If you have any queries or you need assistance please do not hesitate to contact the General Secretary or any other relevant National Officer, we are only too happy to be of help.

For contact details of all the National Officers please either visit the Guild Website: [www.cofegv.org.uk](http://www.cofegv.org.uk) or see the back page of *The Virger* .

We know that there is a fair amount of paperwork to attend to, but it all has a purpose, and unless it is dealt with in the manner required, the system becomes inoperative and this reflects on the support offered to the overall membership.

Finally when you relinquish your post could you please pass these notes, and your Branch files and paperwork on to your successor.

## **MEMBERSHIP** *(Clauses 2.1.1 to 2.4 of the National Constitution)*

Membership is open to all Vergers, (salaried, full or part-time, voluntary or retired) of at least 18 years of age, who may apply to become Full Members of the Guild. Any person of any age who is not a Verger but supports the aims and objectives of the Guild may apply to become an Associate Member.

Members may belong to a Branch of their choosing, and pay the national subscriptions to that Branch annually, however a member may choose to belong also to another Branch, paying only the Branch subscription.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE** *(Clause 1.14 of the Guild Statues)*

The Regional Representatives are the focal point of communication between members and the Executive Committee. They will liaise with branch officers, disseminating information to those officers and receiving information back. Further particulars of this role are laid out within the job description which is held by the General Secretary.

There are four Regional Representatives each of whom is a member of Executive Committee to which they report. They attend all formal meetings held by the Guild. The Regional Representatives are voting members of the Executive Committee. They carry out the instructions of and report to the Executive Committee and submit a report thereon at the Annual General Meeting.

All branches in the region can nominate a Regional Representative to sit on Executive Committee in branch alphabetical rotation. The Regional Representative will hold office for a period of three years.

The Country is divided into four regions: The North, The Midlands, The South West and The South East. Each region will also appoint a Deputy Regional Representative from the next branch in alphabetical rotation. The Deputy Regional Representative will stand in for a Regional Representative when they are not available. Once the Regional Representative has served their term of office the Deputy Regional Representative will take over as the Regional Representative and the next branch will appoint the new Deputy Regional Representative. No one Branch may nominate both a Regional Representative and a Deputy Regional Representative in the same period.

## **FELLOWSHIP OF THE GUILD**

The Executive Committee has the privilege of conferring the Fellowship of the Church of England Guild of Vergers (FCEGV) on persons who have shown “exemplary service” to the organisation.

This honour is not confined solely to Guild members, and has also been bestowed on individuals who have made a significant contribution to the work of the Guild, notably through the Guild Diploma Course, and the General Synod.

There are no more than twelve Fellows at any one time. Subscriptions are not due from Fellows, although they are able, if they choose, to make a donation to the work of the Guild nationally, and/or to pay towards the running costs of their local Branch.

## **LIFE MEMBERSHIP OF THE GUILD**

Members are also welcome to submit via their Branches or their Area Leaders, names of individual Members who have been faithful servants of their Branch locally and the Guild nationally, for consideration by Executive Committee for the award of Guild Life Membership. There are no more than twenty-five Life Members at any one time.

This national award, is not to be confused with any Honorary Branch membership. Guild Life Members do not pay any fees although they are able, if they choose, to make a donation to the work of the Guild, and/or to pay towards the running costs of their local Branch.

There are, by implication, among the list of Life Members those who are “Life Full Members” and “Life Associate Members”, as determined by the circumstances of the individual when the award was made. Therefore any member who the membership wishes to honour by requesting the Executive Committee to appoint them to Life Membership, are giving honour and status to that member. This is in recognition of many years’ service to a Branch and to the Guild nationally, so that they can continue their association with the Guild for the rest of their days, free from the need to pay any subscription.

Life Membership is therefore an award – for life – of membership at the level which is appropriate to that individual’s circumstances. It is no less an award if conferred on an Associate Member.

## **HONORARY BRANCH MEMBERS** *(Clause 3.2.6 of the National Constitution)*

Any Branch may appoint a member (Full or Associate) as an Honorary member of the Branch, Capitation and Magazine subscriptions to be paid by the Branch, again it is not usual to ask for a Branch subscription, but this is left to the individual.

### **BRANCH CHAIRMAN** *(Clause 3.2.2 of the National Constitution)*

The Branch Chairman is elected by the members, and is required to Chair all management meetings. If unable to be present at a meeting then the members will vote to appoint another officer to act for him. (Some Branches appoint a Vice-Chairman as one of the officers). The Branch Chairman will liaise with the Area Leader on Branch and Guild matters.

### **BRANCH SECRETARIES** *(Clause 3.2.2 of the National Constitution)*

Branch Secretaries are required to keep accurate Minutes of the Annual General Meeting and to ensure that copies of the examined accounts are sent to the National Treasurer. Copies of the Annual Returns should be sent to the General Secretary and the National Treasurer (along with remittance of the annual subscriptions).

A list of members should be provided by the Branch Secretary to the General Secretary, defining type of membership i.e. Full or Associate, Fellow, Life Member, Honorary Branch Member. All details, including address, email, contact numbers and if a member receives a magazine should also be submitted to the General Secretary. Also any transfers in or out of the Branch should be reported defining where the member has moved to or from.

Any deaths during the year should also be reported in order that the member may be added to the *Obit Book*. Changes to Members details are reported via the Amendment form.

## **BRANCH TREASURER** (*Clause 3.2.2 of the National Constitution*)

The Financial Year of the Guild is 1 January – 31 December, it is advisable therefore to hold the Annual General Meeting of the Branch as early as possible in the New Year, before the end of March.

Annual subscriptions should be collected and forwarded to the National Treasurer together with the appropriate annual return.

Accurate accounts must be kept and these should be examined by an independent person before being sent to the National Treasurer.

For members who join after 1 January the annual subscription is charged at a pro rata.

Details of such additional subscriptions should be notified to the General Secretary and the National Treasurer via an Interim Returns Form.

Expenses claimed by Regional Representatives/Branch Officials for attending Guild functions vary; advice should be sought from the National Treasurer. See notes on page 9.

### **TIPS FOR TREASURERS**

The task of the Treasurer is to manage the financial affairs of the Branch, ensuring that any monies due to the Branch are collected and banked, that any bills or other obligations are promptly settled, and to maintain such financial records as will enable them to know, and be able to demonstrate, at any time, the financial position of the Branch.

As soon as possible after the end of each year, (in the Guild the financial year and calendar year are the same), the Treasurer should produce an account showing the financial activity of the Branch over the previous year and its end of year state.

The Treasurer will normally issue all cheques on behalf of the Branch but there needs to be at least one other signatory on any account (usually the Branch Chairman or Secretary or both) to ensure that all essential business can be carried on in the absence of the Treasurer.

The Branch may also wish to stipulate that all cheques, or cheques over a certain amount, should be double signed. This is quite usual and is a useful protection for Treasurers.

## FINANCIAL RECORDS

These do not have to be in any particular format providing they enable you to perform the tasks above. If you are used to keeping accounts and have a system you are familiar with, or you inherit a system you are happy with, there is no reason not to continue it.

What is important is that every transaction is recorded and that you have some documentary explanation for it. For example: dues will come with a membership form, donations will normally be enclosed in a letter and so on.

Similarly money going out should be explained by an invoice or receipt. If you are reimbursing a member of the Branch for expenditure on behalf of the Branch insist on a receipt wherever possible and make sure those likely to make a claim know that they will have to provide one.

There will probably be instances when it is genuinely impossible for someone to provide a receipt (e.g. costs for a car journey) but these should be kept to a minimum. In such cases the claimant should give you a written note recording the journey and the amount claimed.

It is worth establishing a Branch policy for such journeys; for example whether you will reimburse petrol costs or pay a mileage rate, and if so what.

All documents explaining financial transactions need to be kept at least until the final Account for the year (see below) has been accepted.

If you are new to the role a very simple way to keep records is to use an analysed cash book. Each line will record a single transaction, (receipt/payment), but the page is also divided into columns. Each column will contain the items relating to a particular Category that you will use in the final account. Such a book might like this:

DATE	NAME	PAID IN	PAID OUT	NATIONAL DUES	BRANCH DUES	POSTAGE	TRAVEL	RUNNING BALANCE
								£100.00
01/01/12	J Smith	£22.00		£17.00	£5.00			£122.00
15/01/12	L Green		£16.45			£5.15	£11.30	£105.55



You can put in as many columns as you need and you may find it more convenient to have Income and Expenditure on separate pages. At “Year End” you can simply total the columns and the Accounts are virtually done for you (that, at least, is the theory).

If you have more than one bank account you should keep a cash book for each. If possible all your transactions should be done through a bank as it makes it easier to keep track of things, but if you find you need to have a petty cash box it should be treated as if it were a bank and have its own cash book.

It is good practice to record transactions as soon as possible after the event. This will ensure that if you are asked in the course of the year to advise on the financial position you are able to do so with authority. It will also enable you to check your bank statements easily and this should be done every time they are received.

If there happen to be any discrepancies in your records it is much easier to correct mistakes you may have made sooner rather than later after the event while you may still be able to remember the transaction. But banks make mistakes too (though they often deny it), and if they have - the quicker you draw attention to it and resolve it - the better.

### **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

The end of year accounts need not be elaborate, but should contain enough information to show where the Branch’s money came from, what it was spent on and how much money the Branch now has.

There are two main forms of accounts – “Income & Expenditure” and “Receipts & Payments”.

Income and Expenditure accounts are compulsory for all large businesses and charities, but for our purposes Receipts and Payments accounts (which are much simpler) are all that is required. The difference is that Income and Expenditure accounts must show all financial transactions relating to the year whether any money has yet been paid or received (or was paid or received in a previous year ) or not. Whereas Receipts and Payments accounts relate only to the movement of cash in the year in question.

The accounts need to show all the receipts and payments under the main headings. If you have maintained a cash book on the lines suggested these figures can be obtained simply by adding up the columns. (It is at this stage that the value of maintaining accurate records as you go along is apparent). Any difference between receipts and payments is added to or subtracted from, as appropriate, the opening balance (which is the closing balance of the previous year's accounts). This new balance must then be tallied with the bank balance(s) of the Branch account(s) as shown in the bank statements.

The accounts must be independently examined and verified. This is a protection both for the Branch as well as the Treasurer. Although this is often referred to as an audit, it is not an audit in the full technical sense and does not require a qualified auditor (not all chartered accountants are qualified as auditors). The examiner may be any reasonably qualified person such as a friendly bank manager, accountant or other financial professional. You could always ask your Church treasurer to do it. If you are your Church treasurer you could ask a colleague from a neighbouring Parish).

The accounts are primarily for your own Branch to accept and there is no set format although the National Treasurer is happy to advise on how they could be presented if asked. A copy of the verified accounts should be sent to the national Treasurer as soon as they have been accepted by the Branch.

## **NATIONAL FESTIVALS**

If your Branch or Region is considering offering to host a National Festival Day, we would be delighted to hear from you. The Branch Secretary or Regional Representative should write to the General Secretary with a proposal, which will be taken to the next Executive Committee Meeting, and then eventually to the National AGM.

There is a separate booklet for organizers setting out the procedures and offering help and advice. Copies are available from the General Secretary or may be downloaded from the website. Please consult this before you begin your detailed planning.

## TRAVELLING EXPENSES

1) The Executive Committee of the Guild will pay:

- a) The travelling expenses of Officers, Officials and Regional Representatives (or Deputy Regional Representatives) to Executive Committee and Standing Committee Meetings (excluding those held during the annual Conference), unless special provision has been made for a residential meeting.
- b) The travelling expenses of the Standing Committee to the AGM.
- c) The travelling expenses of the National Chairman and National Chaplain (or their nominated representatives) to the National Festivals, and other special occasions such as funerals.
- d) The travelling expenses of the Shop Manager (or their nominated representative) to the National Festivals and Conference.
- e) Any other reasonable travelling expenses of the National Chaplain on Guild business.
- f) The travelling expenses of the Conference Secretary or Training Officer on Guild business to actual or prospective Conference venues.

2) The Branch shall pay:

- a) The travelling expenses of National Officers invited to Branch Meetings (unless sent by the Executive Committee, in which case the Executive Committee will pay).

**There is no expectation that branches shall pay** the travelling expenses of Regional Representatives or Deputy Regional Representatives to branch events, unless so offered by the inviting branch.

Expenses claimed should be either the actual cost of the public transport used or a set amount per mile if using your own transport. The Executive Committee will reimburse mileage at the HMRC Approved Mileage Rate; and will reimburse no more for rail travel than the price of a second class ticket. Officers are asked to book cheap advance travel where possible, and to make use of public transport where that would be significantly cheaper than private travel.

Food, accommodation, and parking expenses while travelling will not be reimbursed without Executive Committee authorisation.

