



# PLWYF PORTH TYWYN & PWLL THE PARISH OF BURRY PORT & PWLL

[www.stmarysburryport.org.uk](http://www.stmarysburryport.org.uk)

## CHURCHWARDENS

The office of Churchwarden dates from the 13th Century, and is thus one of the earliest forms of recognized lay ministry. The primary function of the office at that time seems to have been that of taking care of the Church building and its contents, including the responsibility of providing for the repairs of the nave, and of furnishing the utensils for divine service. The Churchwardens had custody or guardianship of the fabric and furniture of the church, and even today, they are the legal guardians of the church's moveable goods, such as moveable furniture, plates and ornaments. They are required to keep an accurate, up-to-date inventory of these items. In the course of time, the ministry has developed. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, they are regarded as the chief lay officers of the church. Whilst there may be sub-wardens to assist the actual Churchwardens, in any parish the Incumbent with the Churchwardens have responsibility for the parish on behalf of the Bishop. The Constitution of the Church in Wales (Chapter VI section 17) states that Churchwarden's shall "*discharge such duties as are by custom assigned to them*"

The customary duties that are assigned to Churchwardens are:

- A Role of Leadership in the Parish alongside Incumbent
- B Encouragement of Laity in the exercise of true religion
- C Responsibility for the finances of the parish and the fabric of the Church building
- D Order and discipline within the church and churchyard
- E Representing laity to Incumbent and Bishop
- F Responsibility for parish with Area Dean during interregnum

Of particular importance in our parish is the preparation and organization of the building for worship. This involves:

- 1 Making sure that the church is open, clean, tidy, lit and warm half an hour before a service
- 2 Making sure that the Altar is prepared before anyone arrives for the Eucharist
- 3 Making sure that people are welcomed properly and books are handed out before the service
- 4 Making sure that disabled people / people with special needs are looked after
- 5 Making sure that the collection is taken / someone is appointed to take the collection
- 6 Directing people up to receive communion when necessary
- 7 Making sure that the church is left clean and tidy for the next act of divine service
- 8 Making sure that any monies / silver / church is locked after the service.
- 9 Making sure that sidespeople are enlisted to help with the execution of these duties.

## SIDESPEOPLE

The *Constitution of the Church in Wales* further makes provision for sidespeople who exist "to assist the churchwardens in the performance of their duties". They usually help (often on a rota basis) particularly with duties 2,3,4,5,6 and 7 above.

Both these roles are both very important and rewarding ways of serving the church and helping it to grow to the glory of God and the edification of his people.