

work. If this is not possible, and emails and attachments cannot be password protected, then no confidential matters should be discussed over email, and only hard copies of Church Committee minutes should be circulated to members.

Church Committee meetings

People's homes, including the Manse, are 'personal spaces'. Therefore, it is regarded as best practice that Church Committee meetings should not be held in people's homes, but are held in Church rooms.

Confidentiality

From the nature of the work of the Church Committee, its members must use the greatest discretion in speaking outside the Committee about its deliberations, particularly in regard to personal matters. All expressions of opinion at meetings of the Committee are privileged, and to be treated in the strictest confidence.

Serving the Local Congregation



on Church Committee

A Guide for Ministers and Church Committee Members

It is an honour to be elected to serve as a member of Church Committee. It is also a mark of respect from those who have elected you. However, the role of serving on Church Committee is more involved than is often realised, and takes up more time than just meeting as a committee once a month. In Moravian practice, the Church Committee is both the Congregation Elders and the executive committee of the Congregation Council, and is responsible, along with the Minister, for the day-to-day management of the Congregation. This means committee members are responsible, along with the Minister, for the pastoral care, worship and management of all aspects of a Moravian Congregation. The Minister and Church Committee serve the Congregation as a response to the love of Christ that they have felt in their own lives. A call to follow Christ is always a call to serve in some capacity. The ministry that Church Committee offers to the congregation is a collaborative ministry. In a like manner, committee members should seek to serve in collaboration with others in the congregation who share the work of the church in so many different capacities. May God bless all our service, for the good of our congregations and communities, and for the glory of our Lord.

THE BOOK OF ORDER

The Book of Order is the constitution of the British Province of the Moravian Church. It can only be amended by resolution at Provincial Synod. Sections 11 to 22 of the Book of Order address how the Church Committee operates and what areas of work it covers. There is a very full index to the Book of Order which is most helpful, as sometimes issues are covered in two different sections. Reference should be made to the full updated Book of Order that must be easily available to all members of the Congregation.

CONGREGATION OFFICIALS:

Congregation Secretary

The Congregation Secretary is the regular correspondent for the congregation and thus will write most of the official letters for, and on behalf of, the congregation that are not strictly confidential. The Secretary, along with the Minister, will also receive most of the correspondence from Church House. This should be dealt with appropriately and may include bringing it to Church Committee meetings for information, discussion and decision as necessary. Although it is not a requirement, it is most helpful if the Secretary can type and has access to the internet for emails.

Treasurer

The handling of money is the responsibility of the whole Church Committee. However, the Treasurer is the financial agent of the congregation. The Treasurer is responsible for the recording and banking of congregation cash, will be a signatory on the accounts, will arrange for the payment of bills and will prepare monthly statements of the finances for Church Committee. In addition, the Book of Order states that if the Minister's house is unoccupied, the Treasurer is responsible for the safe keeping of the premises and its contents. In practice, this can be delegated to another member of Church Committee (e.g. the Property Steward). Additional guidance for the Treasurer and the Church

Church Committee may appoint an Archivist to help with the keeping of records over 30 years old.

Burial Ground

The Burial Ground is under the management of the Church Committee but, in some congregations, a Burial Ground Steward is appointed to help with this work.

Chapel Servants

Getting rooms ready for meetings or worship is the responsibility of Church Committee. The Church Committee may appoint 'Chapel Servants' or 'Door Stewards' to assist in this work. In some congregations, there is a Chief Chapel Servant who coordinates the rota of Chapel Servants/Door Stewards.

Organist

The Church Committee is responsible for the appointment and remuneration (if appropriate) of the organist and/or for organising the organists' rota, or hymnal rota, as appropriate.

Fundraising Co-ordinator

Some congregations have a nominated Fundraising Coordinator to lead fundraising efforts within the congregation. This post is not mentioned in the Book of Order, but some church committees have found it to be a valuable way of increasing the effectiveness of fundraising.

Envelope Steward

Again, some congregations have someone, other than the Treasurer, to administer the envelope scheme and to make sure that as many people as possible take part in regular giving to the congregation.

Email and Church Committee

Because Church Committee work involves confidential or sensitive matters, it is best practice that members of Church Committee do not use email accounts for Church business that other people (i.e. members of their family) have access to. They can easily set up an account to be used only for Church committee

the Health & Safety Policy, the Safeguarding Policy, the Food Handling Policy and the various risk assessments including the Fire Risk Assessment which is a legal requirement. *Please see the papers 'Documentation Necessary for Moravian Congregations' and 'Insurance and Legal Requirements for Moravian Congregations'.*

Youth and Children's Work

The Church Committee is responsible for the appointment of those who work with young people in the Church, including, but not limited to, Sunday School (Junior Church), Youth Fellowship or uniformed organisations (*note not all Scout and Guide groups who meet in Church premises are sponsored by the Church – if they are not sponsored by the Church then this does not apply*). The Church Committee should also be prepared to consult with the leaders of the Young People's organisation, and value, support and encourage this part of the Church's ministry.

Additionally, Church Committee is responsible for ensuring that any group hiring any part of the property for youth purposes, has an appropriate Child Protection policy in place and complied with the Church's 'Safe Space' policy.

Publicity and Communication

A Church must be able to communicate its message to those inside and outside the Church. Therefore, many Churches produce newsletters and have people who are responsible for the maintenance of websites and pages. These appointments should always be approved by the Church Committee, and those appointed should be aware that they act on behalf of the Church and are responsible for the good name of the Church. Church newsletters, or webpages, are not the place for discussion of disagreements within the Church, nor for the presentation of political or other personal viewpoints.

The Church's Records and Archives

The Church Committee is responsible for the safe keeping of all the Church's records. Policy guidance on this has been issued by Church House and there are legal requirements relating to the keeping of many records and their confidentiality. The

Committee can be found in the Treasurer's Handbook.

Property Steward

The care of property is the responsibility of the whole Church Committee. The role of Property Steward is not addressed in the Book of Order. However, for most congregations, the Property Steward is an essential post on Church Committee. The Property Steward will inspect the property on a regular basis and report back to Church Committee on any repairs etc. that are needed. The Property Steward will often liaise with builders to gain quotations for work, and be the point of contact for them during the work. The Property Steward will report on the state of the property to Congregation Council Meetings and will prepare for Church Committee the Property Reports that have to be returned annually to Church House. 'Property' includes all the land, as well as the buildings, that the congregation owns or is responsible for.

Pulpit Secretary

The Book of Order makes provision for the appointment of a Pulpit Secretary. This person arranges pulpit supply, i.e. the supply of Ministers or Lay Preachers to take services in the absence of the Minister. A wise Pulpit Secretary will have a pool of people that they can invite, particularly retired Ministers and registered lay preachers, who are willing to take services in the absence of the Minister. The Pulpit Secretary should also take care that preachers, whom the congregation does not appreciate, are not over-used just because they are conveniently available! The Pulpit Secretary may, or may not, be the person who coordinates the Organists' rota, where such a rota is necessary. In some districts, there is a district-wide pulpit plan that coordinates the pulpit supply, and this reduces the work falling on the congregation Pulpit Secretary.

Minute Secretary

The Minute Secretary takes the minutes of the meeting and ensures they are available for the Minister/Chair of the committee to check before the next meeting. If possible, these should be distributed (by email) to the whole Church Committee to read

before the next Committee meeting so that they can be taken as 'read'. Great care must be taken to ensure that the minutes and Committee emails remain confidential. This can be done by password protection.

Health & Safety Officer

The Church Committee is responsible to the Provincial Board for the health and safety of **all** who enter onto the Church premises, including those who enter uninvited! The post of Health & Safety Officer is not mentioned in the Book of Order, but it is a great help to the working of the Church Committee if a suitable person, who can be a member of the Church Committee, or not, can be appointed to take on this role. Typically, the work will involve drawing up a health and safety policy with the Church Committee, alerting Church Committee to health and safety matters, and helping to resolve them. The Health & Safety Officer will arrange for the regular testing and checking of equipment, and relevant safety risk assessments, to be carried out, and may be involved if there are any incidents on Church property.

Safeguarding Advisor

See Safeguarding and Safe Space Responsibility below.

CHURCH COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Safeguarding and Safe Space

Church Committee members must read the Church's National Safeguarding guidance entitled 'Safe Space', and are responsible for ensuring that the Congregation has a Safeguarding Policy in place. This must be made known to, and followed by, everyone using the buildings, including the any children's groups and those dealing with vulnerable adults. The policy must be reviewed every year by the Church Committee. Church Committee has the responsibility of appointing a Safeguarding Advisor for the Congregation. *Please see Section 1 of 'Safe Space' – entitled 'The Church's Responsibilities'.*

Pastoral Care in the Congregation

The Church Committee share the spiritual oversight and material wellbeing of the congregation with the Minister. As the Congregation Elders, they will support the Minister in maintaining brotherly and sisterly contact with the members. In congregations without a Minister, the spiritual and pastoral oversight of the Congregation are the responsibility of Church Committee. In all cases, the Membership Roll of the Congregation is reviewed and agreed by Church Committee in September, at the beginning of every new Church year. New members are admitted to Church membership after discussion and agreement by Church Committee.

However, because of the Data Protection Act, and an increasing expectation of privacy in our society, the Minister cannot automatically pass on personal details, including address and telephone numbers, to the Church Committee. This is a very sensitive area and the best way to handle this is to explain to congregation members that they have to give permission for their details to be passed on. Sr Lorraine Parsons, the Church House Archivist, can advise on ways to do this. Some congregations ask members to fill in a form with family details, where they can sign an opt-in section which allows the Minister to pass on address details to a named member of Church Committee who will be their pastoral contact in addition to the Minister. Other congregations, particularly those from a Methodist background, develop a Church Directory - but it should be noted that people must sign up to have their names and addresses in the Directory. They cannot be automatically added.

It is not acceptable to give out names of the sick or those in hospital at services, such as Lovefeast, or add them to prayer lists without appropriate permission. Great care should be taken when discussing and recording individual pastoral matters at Church Committee. Pastoral Care is an extremely sensitive area, and confidentiality is important.

General Policies, Documentation and Risk Assessments

The Church Committee is responsible for the creation and approval of the various policies that the Church needs, including