

WHAT IS A CHURCH SECRETARY?

The church secretary plays a key role in all churches and often has a place at the heart of the life of the local church.

Your responsibilities will be unique to your own church. It could be working within a leadership team, or as a local lay leader who oversees most of the church's administration and organisation and is responsible to the Elders' meeting and Church meeting. It can also include acting as the church administrator, pulpit supply officer, worship leader or pastoral secretary.

Essential elements of the role

The church secretary ensures that the meetings of councils of the Church (Church meeting, Elders' meetings, and other task groups) run properly. Typical issues include:

- frequency and dates of meetings, giving notice of meetings and arrangement of agendas
- chairing of meetings, minute taking and distribution
- church rules, including voting practices and quorums
- Special meetings e.g. AGMs, elections, vacancy, etc

Overseeing*: Church records including baptisms, marriages, elders' duty rotas, notices, church membership lists; safeguarding matters (you should have a Safeguarding Co-ordinator to manage this). *including delegating tasks to others



What will I get out of it?

Along with playing a key part in the life of URC Mersey Synod, you will have the satisfaction of knowing you are serving God in this key role.

Practicalities

You are the correspondence and communicator for your congregation, the wider URC along with your church's Synod Rep, local pastorates/group of URCs, Synod or General Assembly/national level. This includes annual statistical returns and General Assembly resolutions for church discussion, ecumenical partners and secular bodies.

A church secretary will always be a member of the Elders' meeting.

Correspondence and communication role

Along with the Minister, the church secretary is usually seen as the church's key contact person who will often be responsible for both dealing with and passing on correspondence for:

- Members, or potential members, of the congregation or other church organisations
- The wider URC, local pastorates/group of URCs, Synod or General Assembly/national level. This might be general correspondence and information or specific forms e.g. annual statistical returns and General Assembly resolutions for church discussion
- Due Diligence Checking Ltd (DDC); the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG)
- Ecumenical partners and secular bodies.

Skills and characteristics of a Church Secretary

- Love for the church
- Tenacity and patience
- Good communication skills
- Pastoral. Good church secretaries have pastoral hearts and a loving concern for others.
- Efficient administrator. Basic office skills are helpful
- A positive and prayerful attitude.

For more information please contact:

The Synod Office

synodoffice@urcmerseysynod.org.uk

0151 722 6590



'Church secretary is the role that makes church life tick ... from a minister's point of view a good church secretary is like gold!'

The Revd Peter Jordan

Church secretaries in their own words:

'... a church secretary must be a support to the Minister, to encourage, to listen and, if necessary, to act as a sounding board.'

'I found that I was sometimes able to pick up undercurrents which the Minister could not be aware of. It's helpful to keep a finger on the pulse of the congregation.'