

The Treasurer's Role

The role of a treasurer is a very important one. Not only will thousands of dollars potentially flow through the Parish's funds, but the Parish is also an independent charity, and will need to conform to Charity Services guidance on its requirements for Annual Returns and filing Annual Accounts. The Methodist Church also has numerous Information Leaflets which may impact upon the role of the Treasurer. Some of these Information Leaflets impact directly on the role of the Treasurer (such as Information Leaflet 64 which relates to GST) but also others which indirectly relate to the role. These are all available from the Methodist Church website or by asking the Connexional Office for paper copies. Appointing a treasurer is a significant step for both the Parish and the individual, and it should be properly thought through. The treasurer does not need to be an accountant – it's important that a potential treasurer has both the honesty and enthusiasm to want to do the job, and some of the following skills and characteristics would be helpful:

Skills and Characteristics

- Reasonable financial competence, and the ability to maintain a basic accounts book either in a manual or computer based but with a preference on using Xero, an online computer based system (training will be provided by the Church).
- Have an understanding of the Parish, its needs and challenges or the ability to want to learn.
- Have a basic understanding of how the parish fits into its wider Synod, the national church contexts and more importantly the Parish community. Once again this can be taught.
- Willingness to attend Parish meetings, not only to deal with financial matters, but also in order to be aware of the Parish plans.
- Be able to explain financial issues clearly within the Parish.
- Be able to maintain confidentiality, particularly with respect to matters that relate to individual church members; e.g. their personal giving.
- Meet the wider requirements of the Church, Charities Services and other external entities the Parish may be involved with.
- Not be disqualified from holding the position by bankruptcy or by convictions for financial wrong doing.
- Although Parish members can be of any age, the role of Treasurer is likely to require someone who is 18 or over. Since the role carries significant responsibility the Parish may also feel that it is appropriate to have someone aged over 18.

You may or may not have been a treasurer of an organisation before. For smaller Parishes, in many respects, the role of Treasurer is not dissimilar from keeping good control of household finances; whilst for the largest parishes greater understanding of some accountancy practice will need to be acquired. While there is no formal training of Parish treasurers, a good handover from the previous treasurer will cover much of what new treasurers will need to know but the Connexional Office is always only a phone call away to answer any questions that a new Treasurer may have.

Key Tasks for a Treasurer

The size and scope of the Treasurer's job will depend on the size and complexity of the Parish. A general Position Description for the role has been prepared and should be given to people who are interested in the role but the key tasks for Treasurers are to:-

- Carry out the financial decisions made by the Parish. The responsibility for both raising and spending money to meet the Parish's responsibilities lies with the Parish Council. The Treasurer implements their decisions.
- Draft an annual budget to assist the Parish Council to plan how it will fulfill its objectives for the coming year.
- Record all financial transactions carried out on behalf of the Parish Council and ensure they are properly authorised.
- Monitor the Parish Council's finances throughout the year, and alert the Parish Council if any difficulties are likely.
- Work with the Parish Council to meet all its financial obligations, especially Stipend payments, Connexional contributions and insurance payments.
- Maintain, and set-up if needed, a book-keeping system.
- Prepare the annual financial statements for approval by the Parish Council, submission of the annual accounts to Synod and the Connexional Office as well as to Charities Services through the Annual Return.
- Complete the Connexional Statistic Forms.
- Prepare and file monthly GST returns.