

# Parish of South Gillingham Team Ministry

## WEDDING VERGER DUTIES



Thank you for acting as Weddings Verger for your friends. The Verger has an important role in ensuring that the wedding happens smoothly by preparing the church for the wedding and in closing it up afterwards. Using this guide will help you do things as easily and quickly as possible.

### A. OPENING UP

1. At least 2 days in advance, arrange with the Parish Office or Warden to collect the keys.
2. Collect the keys. Bring a mobile phone, a coat (if cold) and garden/kitchen gloves with you.
3. Arrive at the church at least 90 minutes before the start of the service.
4. Open the outer church door using the small padlock key.  
Open both outer doors and lock the padlock back onto the hasp.
5. Use the large key to open the inner door.  
The lock is old and you may have to jiggle the key or even turn it twice.
6. The light switches are on the left as you enter. Just put on one or two for now.
7. Look to see if the toilet key is on the font or hymn book case. If it is, leave it there.
8. Go to the chapel and draw back the curtains to the back door. Find the big key and unlock the back door. Leave the key in as a reminder for later. Turn on lights.
9. Find the car park keys on the back door. Also the grabber from behind the inner door.  
If you didn't find the toilet key in the church, it may also be on the back door.
10. Take the car park keys and unlock the left hand gate (trapezoidal key.)  
Lock the padlock back onto the gate. Open the gate and prop it with a traffic cone.  
Park your own car in the car park.
11. Using the grabber and the brush from the porch, clean up the path, gateways and lane and place the rubbish in the black bin.
12. In winter, use the brush to sweep away snow from the same areas and also along the lane.  
Shovels, if needed are in the small cupboard next to the boiler house (see B3.)

### B. POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: HEATING, POWER and VANDALS

1. If we've had a visit from the fly-tippers or car burners, quickly assess if you can deal with it.  
If you can then do so but be careful of sharp edges. If not, call one of the clergy for Ronnie Murray's number.
2. In winter, check that the heating is operating. If not, call Ronnie Murray.
3. If the electrical power doesn't come on then find a torch (usually on top of hymn book case next to the light switches.) Check the trips in the fuse box. To reach this you need to stand on the pew. Only do this if you are safe to do so. If you can't, call Ronnie Murray.  
If the power remains off and all circuits are affected then we have another BPC: Bredhurst Power Cut. It will usually come back on after an hour or so but you need to be prepared.  
Take the boiler house keys and, with great care, go to the small store next to the boiler house. Use the brass key open this, and extract the generator. It is on wheels but hard to pull over the soft ground so get help to carry it to the back door of the chapel.  
There are instructions on how to start the generator in the cupboard. Run an extension lead to the organ. Set out candles for lighting (bottom cupboard, second right in chapel.)

### C. TOILET and PORCH

1. Take the toilet key and open the toilet.
2. Check condition and clean as necessary. Cleaning materials are in the cupboard.
3. Put a new toilet roll on the holder, (in cupboard – more in middle tall cupboard in chapel.)

4. In winter, turn up the heater to 3 and turn on the outside light (inside cupboard.)
5. In summer it is OK to leave the toilet door open.
6. In the porch, remove the notice boards from either side of the main door and the notices blu-tacked to the windows. Store them behind the open outer doors.
7. Place the grey mat over the grid outside the porch. In bad weather, leave this mat in the porch and use the grey mats from next to the outer chapel door.
8. Tidy the porch of any unnecessary clutter, including broken umbrellas.
9. Sweep the porch carpet.

#### **D. FLOWERS**

1. Check the Options List in the black folder above the safe (far right low cupboard) to see if the couple want flowers. At the same time check if they are having a choir.
2. If Yes to flowers and the flowers are out or No and there are none then relax! Otherwise, remove or put out the flowers as appropriate. Store the removed flowers in the chapel. A mop to clean up spilt water is in the toilet.

#### **E. CHAPEL**

1. Tidy the chapel, as far as possible clearing the sloped desk top of everything except the pen stand and the memorial books. Also clear the white altar frontals cupboard of anything that may detract from photographs (vases sticking out of the bride's head are not good.)
2. Get out a table (right tall cupboard) and set up in front of altar frontals cabinet (white.)
3. If there is a choir, you need to have a row of chairs and/or benches on the right hand side of the chancel. These are usually in the chapel. If necessary move them to the chancel now.
4. Leave 3 red chairs out in the chapel. Stack and store the rest in the right hand tall cupboard. Put two of the chairs behind the table and the third one near the tall altar table.
5. Open the middle low cupboard doors to find three drawers. Open the top drawer and take out the blue service book, black velvet pen box, the lapel microphones, a sheet of blotting paper, a pencil and the two click-counters.
6. Check that the pen has ink by unscrewing the upper part of the barrel (NOT the nib – you will get permanent ink all over you.) At the same time, check the ink in the zebra wood pen in the wooden stand. If either is low there is a bottle of Registrar's ink in the next cupboard to the right. Refill the pens in the toilet so as to avoid the risk of any spill in the chapel.
7. Start the entry in the service book with the date, the day (e.g., "Saturday" – if there were previous services leave blank), the time, and the service is "Holy Matrimony".
8. In the bottom drawer (they occasionally move to the middle) find the red velvet table cloth and the ivory lace cover. Arrange these on the table so that the table legs are hidden. Place the Registers, open at the correct pages, so that they are easy to sign. Place blotting paper, pencil and the wooden pen stand on the right hand side of the desk.
9. If there are flowers, place these on the desk.
10. Open the lower door of the dehumidifier and carefully remove the tank. Empty the tank away from the church. When replacing it you must close the door very slowly. If it doesn't start humming you've been too brutal and need to open the door and try again.
11. Empty the bin if necessary (black bags in middle tall cupboard) and put in a new liner.

#### **F. LECTERN and SOUND SYSTEM**

1. Remove the batteries from the lapel microphones and replace with those from the charger on the wall above the low cupboards. Put the used batteries into the chargers and switch the charger off and on to restart the charge cycle.
2. Move the ramp from the chancel step into the chapel. If the couple are having a choir it needs to be stored as near to the inner door as possible so as to allow access to the robes.

- Be very careful with the ramp – it is heavy. Lift it onto its side using the handles and then slide it to where you want it. Always lift with bent knees – never bend your back. Get help if you need it. Remove the edging strip and place it under the front pew.
3. If the lectern is at a lower level, lift it up onto the chancel step.  
Again, it is very heavy and you must take great care. Enlisting guests may be necessary.
  4. Remove the lectern box (place under front pew near the wall) and bible (on front pew.)
  5. Check that the microphone lead is free and that the microphone is correctly positioned near a normal height reader's mouth.
  6. Switch on the sound system power (right of chapel door.)  
Switch on the black box CD power to stop the humming.  
Check that the bottom amplifier is on.
  7. Check that all the microphones are working. A sheet on the side of the sound system shows all the correct settings. Never fiddle with these unless it is to put them back.
  8. If the couple are having a CD or MP3 track played then check that these work.  
There are two CD players to cater for the vagaries of home-made CDs.

#### **G. CHANCEL**

1. Remove the red covers from the altar and side tables. Carefully fold and place in the chapel.
2. Get the four blue cushions from the box under the altar.  
Arrange two on the altar step and two on the chancel step.
3. Move the memorial book cabinet and the candle stand to the sanctuary.  
Be very careful – both are heavy. Never attempt to carry the candle stand on its table – it will fall off and you will be picking up shattered glass for the next hour.
4. Arrange the chairs and benches for the choir.
5. Tidy up the choir stalls, putting excess hymn books on the shelves at the back of the church.
6. Tidy up the clergy stalls. Service sheets go in the boxes in the middle left low cupboard in the chapel, rubbish in the bin.
7. Check that the candle snuffer has a good taper in it.  
If not, spares are in the chapel, 2<sup>nd</sup> low cupboard from right.
8. Check the altar candles. If shorter than 2 inches/5cm remove them and replace with new (same cupboard as tapers.) You will need to trim the bottom of the candle – there is a multi-tool in the top drawer. Refit the candle followers.
9. Light the candles (but leave this till 15 minutes before the service.)

#### **H. CHURCH**

1. Using the grabber, pick up litter from under the pews.
2. Tidy the church, especially around the back.
3. Unplug the sweeper from its charger (behind chapel inner door.) Please be careful – it's delicate. Empty the dust tray into the bin. Sweep the chapel, chancel, and church.
4. Replace cleaner and grabber in the chapel.
5. Place the pedestal table between the font and stoup. On this place the collection plate (left of the altar) and the sign saying General Fund Donations.
6. In winter, light the candles in the various windows. Use the candle snuffer and taper. Spare candles are in the chapel, as above.
7. Ensure that you have the toilet key in your pocket.
8. Check everything is clean and tidy.
9. Turn all the lights on (unless the couple have requested a candlelit ceremony.)
10. Start welcoming the guests!

## **I DURING THE SERVICE**

1. Direct the photographers to the clergy.
2. Assist the Ushers in guiding guests to their seats.
3. Count the people attending the service using the click-counters. You need to record the number of adults (over 16) and the number of children (under 16.)
4. Assist the minister in whatever they might need.
5. When the bride has arrived, be ready to alert the organist or to play the CD as appropriate.
6. During the service, check the car park at regular intervals. If you see anything suspicious call 999, if it looks serious, or 101 if you have a concern but it's not a "crime in progress." Never put yourself in danger. Find a couple of big men from the congregation if necessary.
7. Before, during and after the service be ready to assist guests with, for example, finding the toilet. Warn users of the key to knock and advise all guests to lock the toilet door once inside. The light is on the pull cord to their right. Baby changing kit is in the cupboard.

## **J. AFTER THE SERVICE**

1. When the recessional music has finished, ring the bells for 5 minutes.
2. Extinguish all candles using the snuffer.
3. Check the Registers: that the License has been removed from its book and the Minister has signed all the Registers and entered the witness's names in pencil.
4. Ask the Minister to sign the blue service book.
5. Check if the minister is returning the Registers to the office. If not, put them in the bag and place next to the safe (far right low cupboard.) They will be collected later.
6. When all guests have left, take the collection plate to the chapel and count the money. Forms for recording are in the top drawer.
7. Place the counted collection in the safe (far right low cupboard) and ensure the safe is locked. Note: if you do not have a safe key then simply put the collection in a bag and hand it to the Minister for passing to the Treasurer or, if it's less than £50, leave it next to the safe.
8. Record the numbers of people attending and the collection in the blue service book.
9. Replace the service book, pen in velvet box, pencil, blotting paper, lapel microphones (ensuring they are off) and click-counters to the drawer.
10. Turn off the sound system at the power sockets.
11. Return the collection plate to its place on the shelf near the altar.
12. Return the pen stand to the cupboard top.
13. Carefully fold the table cloths and return them to the drawer.
14. Replace all the red cloths on the altar and side tables.
15. Return chairs and benches from the chancel to the chapel.
16. Return the ramp to the nave – be careful and get help if you need it. Replace the edge strip.
17. Fold and return the table to the cupboard.
18. Layout the chapel so there are 3 rows of 2 chairs facing the tall altar.
19. If the flowers were removed from the church, replace them.
20. Go round the church with the grabber and collect and bin all litter.
21. Return the lectern box and the bible to the lectern.
22. Replace any laminated reading sheet on the lectern to the blue envelope in the chapel.
23. Sweep the whole church, including the porch, with the cleaner.  
Empty the dirt tray and plug the cleaner back into its charger.
24. Check the pew cushions for 'wet' stains and wipe clean as necessary.
25. When the guests have finished with the photographs and the bride has left (not before), sweep the church path of all confetti, etc. Gather up empty boxes and bin them.
26. Check and, if necessary, clean the toilet.

27. Turn off all toilet lights, inside and outside, and check that the door is properly shut.
28. In winter, return the toilet heater thermostat to its frost setting.
29. Return the mat from the grid to where it came from.
30. If necessary, return the generator set to the cupboard by the boiler house.
31. Take your car out of the car park and lock the car park.  
If there are cars left in the car park place a note on the windscreen asking people to ring Graham on 373036 but noting that he may not be able to do anything till the morning.
32. Return the car park, boiler house and toilet keys to the hooks on the chapel door.
33. Lock the chapel door. This can be difficult. Test it to make sure it really has locked.  
Put the key on its hook and draw the curtains.
34. Check that all the skirting blowers are on.
35. Turn off the chapel lights.
36. Turn off all the church lights. Double check that no candles or lights have been left on.
37. Lock the inner door.
38. If it is dark you can get light in the porch by pushing the round button to the right of the outer door. The light will stay on for around 15 minutes.
39. Lock the outer door.
40. Shut the gate.
41. Return the keys.
42. Have a good evening.

**SAFEGUARDING FOR NON-CHURCH VERGERS**

Vergers will at times be alone in the church and may also be working in close proximity to younger members of our choir. Our wedding vergers are always both well known to us and we have assured ourselves as to their suitability. If a couple prefer to use a friend as the wedding verger, both the verger and the couple must read and sign the declarations on this form.

Failure to do so will result in our not allowing the proposed verger to carry out their duties and the church will not be prepared, only opened, for the service. This form will be passed to the Safeguarding Officers for Children and Vulnerable Adults who may ask for further checks.

Names of wedding couple		
Date and Time of Wedding		
Full name of proposed verger		
Former names if any		
Home street address		
Town		
Postcode		
Landline		
Mobile		
Email address		

Verger declaration:

*I declare that I have no unspent convictions relating to property or dishonesty, and that I have never been convicted or cautioned for an offence involving a child or vulnerable adult. I have read the list of duties and am satisfied that I can carry them out safely.*

Signed

..... Date: .....

Declaration by couple

*We are satisfied that the person named above is a fit and proper person for these duties and we are not aware of them having any unspent convictions relating to property or dishonesty, or of them ever having been convicted or cautioned for an offence involving a child or vulnerable adult. We have read the list of duties and are satisfied that our proposed verger can carry them out safely.*

Signed

..... Date: .....

..... Date: .....

All information is held safely and in confidence, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.