



Waikato Taranaki Anglicans

Called to Serve

A Guide for Wardens, Members of Vestry and Parish Councils

Grateful Hearts, Servant Hands

2026 Edition

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Introduction

This guide has been a companion to wardens and vestry members in the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki for approximately thirty years. First produced in the mid-1990s under the title *Getting Fired Up for God*, it has been revised and updated across a number of editions to reflect changes in legislation, diocesan life, and the growing shape of our bicultural identity. This 2026 edition continues that tradition under a new name – *Called to Serve* – updated to reflect the Diocese's renewed strategic direction.

It is our hope and prayer that those taking office as Churchwardens and members of the Vestry or Parish Council will find in these pages both encouragement and practical guidance for the road ahead.

Our bodies have many parts, but the many parts make up only one body when they are all put together.

So it is, with the 'body' of Christ. Each of us is a part of the one body of Christ ... and some of the parts that seem weakest and least important are really the most necessary.

All of you together are the one body of Christ, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it.

1 Corinthians 23: 12, 22, 27

Our Diocese

The Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki stretches from the iron sands of South Taranaki to the beautiful Bay of Plenty; some of the most spectacular and abundant land of the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Taking its name from the mighty Waikato river and the majestic Mt Taranaki, the Diocese honours its shared heritage with the people of Te Manawa o te Wheke and Te Upoko o te Ika.

The Diocese of Waikato was constituted in 1926. In 2010, and honouring the dream of Bishop Selwyn 165 years ago, the Diocese was renamed as the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki.

This Diocese holds a unique place in the Anglican Communion, having two Bishoprics; the Bishopric of Waikato and the Bishopric of Taranaki. This also means that there are two Cathedrals; the Waikato Cathedral Church of St Peter and the Taranaki Cathedral Church of St Mary.

Currently, both the Bishopric of Waikato and the Bishopric of Taranaki are led by the Most Reverend Philip Richardson.

The Diocese is divided into a number of archdeaconries.



What Is Vestry?

In a nutshell ... what is Vestry?

IS

A group of individuals who are ...

- United in the Holy Spirit
- Supportive encouragers and co-workers with the clergy
- Responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Church – finances, buildings, equipment
- The spiritual leadership of the Church
- Informed about the Parish and life of the wider church

ISN'T

A group of individuals who are ...

- Each seeking to push their own views
- An extension of the personalities of the clergy
- Just another secular business management system

DOES

- Spend time in prayer – before, during and after the meeting
- Listen to each other, and to parishioners
- Inform the whole parish of its business and decisions
- Arrive at unified decisions whilst aiming for consensus
- Delegate in order to use the gifts of all

DOESN'T

- Make decisions which they individually will not support themselves
- Neglect the social aspect of Koinonia
- Disregard the wisdom of Scripture, tradition and reason
- Ignore the insights of various cultures as represented on Vestry

Code of Conduct for Vestries, Boards and Committees in the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki

General principles for governance

The *Five Fold Anglican Mission Statement* and *Te Pouhere, the Constitution of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia* are foundational to governance and leadership in this Diocese. Diocesan governance bodies, which include Synod, parish vestries, boards and committees, are expected to seek God's wisdom through prayer and attention to scripture, and by upholding the following principles to ensure that outcomes benefit all:

Key principles include:

Stewardship: We faithfully steward the resources, people, and mission God has entrusted to our care.

Servant leadership: We lead by serving others, following Christ's example.

Wisdom: We seek God's wisdom in our decision-making and rely on prayer for discernment.

Grace-filled fellowship: We interact with one another in love and acceptance, speaking and acting with kindness, forgiving readily, and building each other up in faith.

Unity in purpose: We work together collaboratively, seeking God's will above personal agendas.

Transparency: We conduct our work openly and honestly, being accountable to our community and God.

Justice: We make fair and equitable decisions that protect the vulnerable and promote righteousness.

Integrity: We align our actions with our Christian values, maintaining consistency between our faith and practice.

Accountability: We exercise collective accountability and self-discipline with love, restoration, and the good of the community in mind.

Consequential Principles:

Christian values

- Mission-oriented leadership: Members must work together to actively support the mission of the church, including worship, community outreach, faith development and evangelism.
- Promoting Justice and Righteousness: The Bible calls for the pursuit of justice and righteousness in all aspects of life, including governing.
- Integrity and accountability: Members are accountable for their decisions to the public, the church, and each other. This includes maintaining the highest ethical standards and transparency.
- Service and purpose: Governance should be purposeful and centered on the community. Members are called to servant leadership with a desire to improve the well-being of those the church serves.
- Christian Character: John 13:34 invites us to “Love each other as Christ loves us”. Ephesians 4:3 calls for “humility, gentleness, patience and bearing one another in love”. This should be reflected in all our interactions, both personal and collective.

Fiduciary duties

- Honesty and financial integrity: Members have a duty to act honestly and with probity in all financial matters. This includes using resources for their intended purpose and avoiding waste.
- Avoiding conflicts of interest: All actual or potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed. Members should not use their position for personal gain or to unfairly favour particular interests.
- Legal and constitutional compliance: Boards must understand and act in accordance with all relevant legal requirements and the specific governing documents of their church entity.

Boardroom conduct

- Collective responsibility: After a decision is made by the board, all members must support it publicly, regardless of their individual opinion during deliberations.
- Confidentiality: Information discussed at board meetings should be kept confidential unless otherwise agreed. Members should not make derogatory comments about fellow members or board decisions outside of meetings.
- Constructive participation: Members are expected to be prepared for meetings, participate actively, and engage in constructive debate. The board culture should allow for disagreement and challenge in a respectful manner.

Respectful relationships

- Diversity and inclusion: Vestries, boards and committees are encouraged to reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.
- Members should treat staff, volunteers, and the public with courtesy, impartiality, and respect.
- Safe spaces: Vestries, boards and committees must uphold the church's safeguarding and ministry standards, which include an obligation to report abuse. They should promote a culture where people feel safe to speak up.

Role of Vestries

- To model discipleship to the congregation as wardens and vestries / parish councils
- To assist the work of governance held by the Diocesan Synod and Bishop and delegated to regional conferences and vestries
- To ensure good communication is maintained between all sectors of the parish community
- To maintain effective networks of information and shared purpose between parish, archdeaconry and diocese
- To provide consistent, mission focused and future oriented planning of finances, property maintenance and leadership succession within the parish
- To ensure effective administrative systems and processes are transparent, accessible and consistent
- To monitor the workload of the parish to ensure it is appropriately delegated and widely shared
- To ensure all health and safety matters are monitored regularly, minimising risk

Responsibilities of Vestry

- Promote worship and encourage the spiritual growth and wellbeing of parishioners
- Promote Christian education
- Ensure the overall good management of the parish
- Ensure the care of church buildings, furnishings and equipment, including any alterations and improvements
- Decide on any paid positions in the parish
- Provide a vicarage free of charge to the vicar and free accommodation for all other full time assistant clergy (or, instead, an appropriate housing allowance)
- Inspect annually all church buildings, including the vicarage, and make sure appropriate maintenance is carried out
- Keep minutes of all vestry meetings, AGMs and SGMs of parishioners
- Ensure all collections are recorded, kept safe and promptly banked
- Ensure proper accounts are kept and recorded
- Ensure that health and safety is taken seriously and that all legal requirements are followed

In carrying out its responsibilities for finances and property, Vestry must follow any additional requirements in the diocesan statutes, set out at the end of this guide.

Reading the duties of vestry in the Parishes Statute, one might be forgiven for thinking vestry has to do everything. Vestry's role is primarily a governance role. Vestry may be responsible for the spiritual growth of the parish and its overall good management, but this doesn't mean it has to do it all by itself. Vestry's role is primarily an oversight and monitoring role – although members might also be involved in the detailed management of the parish.

The Parish Council in a Cooperating Venture

Some cooperating parishes retain separate vestries, sessions and leaders' meetings but most parishes have a combined parish council.

Parish councillors are elected at the Annual General Meeting and the Anglican members of the parish council are regarded as the vestry which is called together as a body on those rare occasions when the constitutional requirement of the Anglican Church requires it. Parish councillors are elected for a term of one year with the right of re-election.

After the election, the parish councillors will be commissioned during a service of public worship for their work during their one-year term of appointment.

The parish council has the responsibility, together with the minister[s], for all aspects of parish life. This means that a parish council, in theory, has more responsibility than a vestry.

Functions of a parish council include:

- Encouraging Christian commitment and devotion
- Exercising pastoral care for all parishioners
- Fostering mission to the community
- Fixing the time and places for public worship
- Arranging for the celebration of the sacraments
- Keeping the parish records
- Electing parish representatives to the church courts
- Liaising between the parish and the local and national church bodies
- Maintaining the parish finances
- Arranging the parish meetings and the elections
- Reporting to the parish at least annually

The Meeting

Some suggestions for your Vestry Meeting:

- Should be held once a month on a set day and time, or twice a month in some parishes
- Should start with either Eucharist, Bible Study or other devotion and led by a different person each meeting
- Can be held in either a different member's home each month or held in the Church lounge, Vicar's Office or other central point
- The Vicar can chair the meeting, but a Vestry member can be appointed at the Vicar's discretion
- Should start promptly and have an agreed closing time – although there can be a possible extension. The optimum meeting time is two hours – see Statute 15
- Should stay with the advertised agenda, but members can give notice of non-contentious items in General Business
- The agenda should be sufficiently flexible to allow room for the Holy Spirit to move – giving thanks and praying during the course of the meeting, and not just at the beginning and the end
- Members should be reminded of special items of concern
- A five-minute break per hour is recommended during the course of each meeting
- When the occasion demands, break into small groups for discussion with report back time
- A special speaker from the community can be invited to attend to give a short talk and answer questions – this can be a very enriching experience
- Supper can be served but this is best done by someone not on Vestry

Between Vestry Meetings

- Each member is responsible for the care and support of another leader or office bearer of the Church – a direct line to Vestry other than via the clergy. This should be someone who cares – the clergy spouse and the parish secretary can be vulnerable and could sometimes appreciate a caring and praying friend.
- Clergy also need ministering to – this can be the Vicar's Warden or another appointed person to visit or phone regularly to check if there are problems at the clergy house.
- Clergy leave and supervision need to be monitored and records kept of leave, supervision and spiritual direction as appropriate. Leave records also need to be kept for any staff that are paid a wage.
- The Minutes should be sent out as soon as possible after the meeting.
- A copy of the Minutes should be posted on the church notice board. These can be circulated among the congregation as well.
- A summary of important matters should be either published in the parish magazine or in the pew sheet.
- An annual planning / quiet day for members and elders is recommended.
- An annual dinner for vestry members and the partners is also recommended.
- A staff meeting should be held weekly where the vicar, any assistant clergy, licensed lay ministers, parish secretary and clergy partners can share to consider spiritual and organisation matters.
- Eldership is a small group of key people who meet weekly with the vicar and assistant clergy to share in spiritual and organisation matters.

What Can the Parish Expect of You as a Vestry Member

- A love for and a commitment to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour.
- An acknowledgement of Him as head of his church in your location.
- A commitment to make vestry meetings a priority in your diary.
- A commitment to regular weekly worship.
- A commitment to be in touch with parish life in general – this avoids making 'remote' decisions.

- To commit yourself to honestly, openly and prayerfully seek God's will for the church in your area and for the wider Diocesan family.
- To commit yourself to the other members of the vestry in practical support, love and prayer so to witness to Christ's love among you.

Duties & Responsibilities of the Churchwardens

- To collect, attest and record collections, although this may be delegated.
- To provide for accommodation of the congregation in church.
- To preserve the order during the services.
- To take care of the church buildings and their contents.
- To ensure the bread and the wine are available for the Eucharist.
- To make an annual inspection and to report on the state of the church property.
- To furnish vestry with a financial statement at each meeting.
- To report to the Diocesan Registrar Manager when the parish is \$2,000 or more in overdraft.
- To prepare audited / reviewed annual financial accounts for the parish Annual General Meeting.
- To keep the parish roll up to date.
- To appoint deputies if available to assist with these duties.

For more information, please refer to Statute 15, Parishes Statute, Clause 11–13.

It is suggested that the churchwardens shall together or on a rotational basis, attend the principal Sunday Act of Worship as follows:

- In a welcoming 'Ministry at the Door' role.
- In a supervisory role along with the Sides people at any services with large congregations.
- In a 'generally available' role so that parishioners and others may speak to them of any matter of concern.

Sometimes wardens are recipients of personal information or confidential approaches. The following guidelines can apply:

1. In the gospel of Matthew 18:15–20, we have the principles that govern the processing of complaints and handling of criticism and tension between Church members.

"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But, if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you lose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."

2. The first principle here is that parishioners with concerns about another parishioner or the vicar or a member of staff ought to pray about whether they can respectfully, safely and calmly resolve the matter with the other person one-on-one. A warden can encourage them to pray about whether this is possible in the first instance. The principle is that tension should be addressed, if possible, at the most immediate flax roots level with the immediate people involved.
3. The second principle is that some matters, as in Matthew 18, cannot be resolved one-on-one. In this instance, facilitation and or mediation is needed. A warden might offer to do this or to choose someone recommended by the Diocese. The Vicar, or if the Vicar is implicated, then the Archdeacon, or the Bishop's Office can be approached for advice about whether the warden or someone else might be most helpful. If the warden facilitates or mediates, then the strict rules of confidentiality apply under New Zealand's privacy laws. The matter may not be divulged to others unless both parties agree and they can help shape what is said to others.
4. The third principle is that some matters, as in Matthew 18, cannot be resolved by mediation. In this case the matter should be referred to the Archdeacon for a ruling. If this is not possible or appropriate, then the matter is referred to the Bishop. If the matter is a serious ethical complaint, then the Diocese should be approached for its official contact person who can guide the complainant.

Please be assured of the respect and trust of the Diocese as you carry out such delicate and complex roles. You have the confidence of your Vicar and or Vestry as a Warden, and this means you are a recognised elder in this Church. Our prayers and encouragement will always be with you as you shoulder these responsibilities.

Safeguarding Policy

The Anglican Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki is committed to promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to keeping all people safe. Anglican communities should be places where everyone feels welcomed, respected and safe.

This policy applies to everyone in parish life – including vestry members, wardens, synod representatives, treasurers, and other office holders, not just clergy and licensed ministers. As an office holder, you are expected to know the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and to uphold it.

Your Parish Responsibilities

Every parish must appoint a Safeguarding Lead to oversee safeguarding matters and liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator (DSC). Parishes must follow safe recruitment practices, ensure all leaders have completed required safeguarding training, and report all safeguarding concerns to the Safety Lead and DSC within 24 hours.

Making a Complaint

If a concern involves the conduct of an ordained minister, licensed person, or office holder, complaints should be directed to the Ministry Standards Commission, which handles all such matters independently.

Ministry Standards Commission: www.ministrystandards.org | 0800 004 031 | registrar@ministrystandards.org

For other concerns – disputes or behaviour that does not involve a breach of ministry standards – speak with your local priest, archdeacon, or contact the Diocesan Manager at manager@wtanglican.nz.

Full Policy

The full Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, along with Codes of Conduct for Children and Youth Ministry, is available at www.waikatotaranakianglicans.nz/complaints/

Lay Ministry Licences

Baptised lay people exercising ministry with sole responsibility, or with responsibility for the ministry of or with others, shall be licensed by the Bishop to the Office of Licensed Lay Minister. Anyone leading a ministry with children, young people, and/or vulnerable adults must be licensed to undertake that ministry role on behalf of the Church.

An applicant for parish-based ministry shall be nominated in writing by no fewer than two members of the parish amongst whom the Lay Person is to serve, with approval by the Minister in Charge and Vestry, Parish Council or equivalent authority.

A parish may also issue **Ministry Certificates** to lay people performing tasks under the direct supervision of a Bishop's Licence holder – for example, assisting in worship, home groups or Sunday School. Ministry Certificates do not cover one-on-one ministry, and any ministry with children, young people or vulnerable adults requires the physical presence of a licenced person.

A **Specialist Licence** may be granted for a specific ministry, subject to conditions in the letter of appointment. A **Healing Ministry Licence** may, at the Bishop's discretion, authorise a lay person to anoint with consecrated oil. The Bishop determines all licensing for Diocesan ministries.

Boundaries Courses

Understanding and respecting boundaries is essential to healthy ministry. The level of training required depends on your role:

Ordained ministers and Licensed Lay Ministers must complete the first three Ministry Standards modules and accompanying quizzes.

Specialist Licence applicants must watch the Boundaries: Children, Family and Youth Ministry video and email bishopsoffice@wtanglican.nz once completed.

Those with Permission to Officiate (PTO) must complete the first two Ministry Standards modules – noting that a PTO is not an ecclesiastical office or licence.

All office holders – including Vestry members, Synod Representatives, Treasurers, Wardens, and Canons – are required to complete the first two Ministry Standards modules, as all who have signed the Declarations of Assent are subject to Canon D, Titles I–VI.

For all training units, a quiz must be completed with a grade of 80% or higher. This demonstrates the Diocese's serious commitment to the care of vulnerable people and the promotion of healthy behaviours.

Diocesan Support – There to Serve and Help

These committees cover the mission, ministry and the administration of the Diocese. The areas of ministry and the functions are set out in Statute 5, The Standing Committee Statute 2014.

Standing Committee

Standing Committee is made up of both clerical and lay members of Synod and are elected to deal with Diocesan matters when Synod is not in session.

The Diocesan Registrar Manager

The Diocesan Registrar Manager and the administration staff deal with the administration of the Diocese and its many councils and committees.

WAIKATO OFFICE	
Building	Charlotte Brown House
Address	104 Morrinsville Road, Te Ara Hou Village
Postal	PO Box 21, Hamilton 3240
Phone	07 857 0020
Email	admin@wtanglican.nz
Website	www.waikatotaranakianglicans.nz
TARANAKI OFFICE	
Building	Tikituterangi House
Address	566 Mangorei Road RD 1, New Plymouth
Phone	06 759-1178

There is one sub-committee: Finance, Risk & Audit

Our Diocesan Manager is the first point of contact for any governance, administrative, financial or property matter: manager@wtanglican.nz

The Bishop's PA is the first point of contact for the Bishop:
bishopsoffice@wtanglican.nz

Contact the Bishop's Chaplain for any matter to do with licensed ministry, lay or ordained, including discernment or training for ministry:
bishopschaplain@wtanglican.nz

Faculties

A faculty is the Bishop's formal permission for a parish to make changes to a consecrated church building, its contents, or associated property. Consecrated buildings are not simply parish property – they are held in trust for present and future generations, and the faculty system exists to ensure significant decisions about them are made carefully and with proper oversight.

A faculty is required before a parish sells, purchases, erects, alters, or demolishes any church, hall, vicarage, or other building, and before altering the fabric, furniture, monuments, fittings, or vessels within a church. Minor repairs and routine maintenance do not require a faculty. If in doubt, consult the Archdeacon or Diocesan Registrar Manager before any work is planned.

The Bishop appoints Faculties Advisory Groups for each Bishopric, bringing architectural, historical, and theological expertise to the assessment of proposals – helping parishes make better decisions, especially with heritage buildings.

How to Apply

Submit a petition to the Diocesan Registrar Manager through the Archdeacon, including full details of the proposal, relevant plans or drawings, and a copy of the Vestry resolution approving it. For any building sale or purchase, the consent of the appropriate Trust Board is also required.

For more information, see Statute 13, The Faculties Statute 2014, available at www.waikatotaranakianglicans.nz/statutes/. A Petition for a Faculty is available under the Property section at www.waikatotaranakianglicans.nz/parish-administration/

Canons and Statutes

There are two sets of rules which govern the life of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

A. The Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

The Constitution (Te Pouhere) and Canons are the laws governing the whole church. They are organised into sections called Titles – for example, Title A covers Ministers, and Title B covers Organised Bodies in the Church. Titles run from A to G. The Constitution and Canons are available at www.anglican.org.nz/Resources/Canons.

B. Statutes And Standing Resolutions Of The Diocese Of Waikato And Taranaki

The life of the Diocese is governed by a combination of Acts of Parliament, Diocesan Statutes, and Standing Resolutions. These are the laws that govern the church within the Diocese, and include Standing Orders that set out how Synod is to be conducted. All current statutes are available at www.waikatotaranakianglicans.nz/statutes/. When a statute is updated or replaced, the statutes page will always reflect the current version.

The key statutes for vestry members are:

Statute 15 – The Parishes Statute 2009 This is the primary statute for vestry members. It covers the formation and administration of parishes, the responsibilities of vestry, churchwardens and the treasurer, meetings, elections, records, and the mission of the church. Vestry members are encouraged to spend some time studying this statute together at a meeting soon after the Annual General Meeting. Pay particular attention to Clauses 11 through to Clause 27, and to the First Schedule – The Mission of the Church.

Statute 13 – The Faculties Statute 2014 Governs the faculty process – the Bishop's formal permission required before any significant changes are made to consecrated buildings, their contents, or associated property.

Statute 51 – The Lay Ministry Licences Statute 2025 Governs the licensing of lay people in ministry across the Diocese, including Ministry Certificates,

Licensed Lay Ministers, Specialist Licences, and Healing Ministry Licences. It sets out the requirements for nomination, screening, training, supervision, and renewal of all lay ministry licences.