

ESSEX CLERGY CHARITY

Since the middle of the eighteenth century this Charity has responded to the needs of "poor clergy" serving in what has now become the Diocese of Chelmsford.

Our day-to-day work is entrusted to a small group of voluntary officers who deal with emergency and compassionate grants as and when a qualifying need comes to their attention. They also administer the payment of grants triggered by altered circumstances such as the birth of a child, the death of a partner, children's various educational milestones, retirement from a vicarage, and so on. Currently all three officers are members of the clergy, but this is by no means a requirement.

The Charity's reach is very broad: we assist the single as well as the married, the self-financing as well as those on the Church Commissioners' payroll, the inner city as well as the rural clergy of our Diocese.

Our **Governors** play a vital rôle in the life of the Charity. Some are appointed ex officio, others are chosen as representing a particular aspect of church life within the Diocese of Chelmsford. Together they constitute a body corporate with perpetual succession and act as "trustee for all purposes". The Essex Clergy Charity Corporation is therefore the sole trustee of the Essex Clergy Charity, in relation to which it holds ultimate responsibility for all matters of administration and management. The Chair of Governors is the Lord Bishop of Chelmsford for the time being, in his capacity as their ex-officio President.

Once a year our Governors gather for the "Court of Audit" - in effect, the Annual General Meeting. They review the contents of the Annual Report, discuss matters related to the health and effectiveness of the Charity, and shape policy decisions for the future. The part played by Governors looks set to increase as a result of forthcoming changes in our corporate governance structures. These reforms will ensure compliance with best practice in Charity administration as required by recent changes in UK Charity legislation. Specifically, Governors may be required to attend some additional meetings and to act more vigorously in their capacity as policy decision-makers and ambassadors for our work.

Currently there are three honorary **Officers**: a Treasurer, a Secretary, and an Assistant Secretary. They are appointed by and hold office "during the pleasure" of the governing body, as confirmed in a letter of authority from the President of the Charity. They receive no payment or honorarium; however, reasonable expenses are re-imbursed according to an agreed scale. It is hoped that in the near future a fourth officer will be appointed on similar terms to serve as Development Officer.

It is vital for all the officers to relate well to each another, given the need for flexibility in the discharge of functions (i.e. they ensure seamless continuity by covering for one another in the event of unavoidable absences). The officers maintain regular contact by email and telephone. They meet four times a year to formally acknowledge recent actions and to review forthcoming requirements as per an established yearly cycle of activities. These meetings also provide an opportunity for the Officers to discuss a wide range of matters concerning the effectiveness of the Charity so that any areas of concern may be brought to the attention of the Governors.

The rôle of **Treasurer**

The chief responsibility of the Treasurer is to manage the accounting functions of the charity. This involves being the collecting point for donations made by the churches, individuals and other bodies, then banking and recording them and issuing receipts; also issuing cheques for our grants: the summer round of grants to clergy with children, death and retirement grants, birth grants, widows' cheques at Christmas, and other exceptional grants during the year. These are all recorded and filed with an appropriate audit trail. The main accounts have in recent years been recorded on a spreadsheet, but we are currently in the process of moving over to a Sage accounting software package. In addition to this, the Treasurer prepares the accounts for audit, and then oversees the gift aid claim.

The rôle requires someone familiar with accounts and accounting procedures; also some awareness of the task of a PCC Treasurer would be helpful. The work takes on average ½ a day a week, with secretarial assistance paid for by the charity of two hours a week. Further time is needed around the end of the financial year to consolidate and prepare the accounts for audit, prepare the schedules of parish giving, and to liaise with the auditors. Ability to supply own transport is desirable but not essential. Access to a computer and printer with confidentiality protection and secure storage (both physical and electronic) is essential, as is a working knowledge of email, word processing, spread sheets and computerised accounting.

The rôle of **Secretary**

The chief responsibility of the Secretary is to support the Governors in discharging their various responsibilities for administration and management of the Charity. Working in co-operation with the other officers, office holders and supporters of the Essex Clergy Charity, the Secretary combines the rôle of "Chief Executive Officer" with that of "Company Secretary".

The Secretary is directly responsible for:

1. Ensuring that meetings (of both Governors and Officers) are effectively organised and minuted (NB the Assistant Secretary minutes the Officers' meetings);
2. Ensuring that the annual operational cycle of the Charity is maintained and appropriate records maintained (especially with regard to both the business and domestic arrangements for the annual 'Court of Audit' and Area meetings);
3. Upholding any legal requirements such as those based on the governing documents and the wider requirements of current charity law such as those relating to transparency and compliance, plus issues of risk management and continuity planning;
4. Securing expeditious handling of all communications and correspondence. These include calls for help or guidance (some of which may require a home visit), welcome letters to clergy moving into or within the diocese, thank-you letters in response to major donations, contributing narrative sections to the Annual Report prepared by the Treasurer, drafting, publishing and distributing a 'popular' version of the statutory Annual Report, maintaining contact with local representatives of the Charity in each Rural/Area Deanery, and acting as electronic postmaster and webmaster for the Charity.

The amount of time required to discharge the office is variable: the current incumbent finds it probably averages out at around one day per week (excluding tasks to be transferred to the new appointment of a Development Officer). However, some emergency and compassionate applications demand a speedy response (in co-operation with the Treasurer) since the Charity has a reputation for making urgent payments without delay.

Ability to supply own transport is desirable but not essential. Access to a computer and printer with confidentiality protection and secure storage (both physical and electronic) is essential, as is a working knowledge of email, spreadsheets and word processing (including, if possible, mail merge and database manipulation). It is desirable for the Secretary to have some skills and experience in creating, registering and maintaining electronic mail boxes, web sites, and points of presence within social media, with a view to sharing some of these responsibilities with a newly appointed Development Officer.

The rôle of **Assistant Secretary**

The chief responsibility of the Assistant Secretary is to manage the process by which our "summer round" of grants (for children; birth; school uniform clothing; higher education; educational trips; and interview visits to colleges) is paid to those who qualify. This involves:

1. Recommending (to the officer group) the size and scope of these annual grants and their associated means-tested thresholds, in the light of financial guidance from the Treasurer;
2. Preparing and distributing application forms, including information regarding size and scope of grants as determined by the officer group;
3. Processing completed application forms and resolving anomalies (in consultation with fellow officers when necessary);
4. Preparing a final officer-approved list of grants for payment by the Treasurer;
5. Monitoring feedback from beneficiaries and bringing any appropriate recommendations for future changes or adjustments to the attention of the Governors at their Annual Court of Audit.

In addition, the Assistant Secretary minutes the meetings of the officers and provides ad hoc cover for the Secretary of the Charity. Access to a computer and printer with confidentiality protection and secure storage (both physical and electronic) is essential, as is a working knowledge of email, spreadsheets and word processing. (All of the above mentioned application forms, spreadsheets and documents would be made available in electronic form to any incoming Assistant Secretary – to save time and negate the need to "reinvent the wheel").

The rôle of **Development Officer**

The Development Officer will:

1. Be the foremost ambassador for our Charity, speaking and encouraging others to speak on our behalf as effectively as possible and broadcasting information through social media as well as more traditional forms of communication;
2. Take forward the ongoing work of reforming the Charity so that our current governing instrument of 1917 can be revised to meet the needs of a changing church within a changing society (this will call for legal acumen, pastoral awareness, and preferably some experience in dealings with the Charity Commission);
3. Extend the scope and range of risk assessment profiles already prepared by the Officers of the Charity;
4. Devise and (subject to approval by the Governors) implement a means of raising approximately £20,000 per annum in addition to our present income;
5. Attend approximately half a dozen meetings a year with Officers and Governors of the Charity, in a range of locations across the Diocese.

It is envisaged that these tasks would take up approximately one day a week (based on the experience of the current Secretary, who is currently attempting to cover these additional responsibilities with varying degrees of success).

Ability to supply own transport is desirable but not essential. Access to a computer with confidentiality protection and secure storage (both physical and electronic) is essential, as is a working knowledge of email, spreadsheets and word processing (including, if possible, mail merge and database manipulation).

It is essential that the Development Officer be fluent and effective in communicating from a variety of platforms, including both the traditional hard-copy style of parish papers and the contemporary argot of electronic interactions. It would be helpful, though not essential, for the Development Officer to have skills and experience in creating, registering and maintaining electronic mail boxes, web sites and points of presence within social media, with a view to relieving the Secretary of some of these responsibilities.

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