

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
PRESBYTERY OF ARDROSSAN

GOVERNANCE IN THE CHURCH

For the Guidance of Office-bearers
A Report approved by the Presbytery on 2 September 2008

GOVERNANCE IN THE CHURCH

Governance has been defined as being "The systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organisation"

In the Charity Sector Trustees take responsibility for the governance of their charity. It is not a role for trustees alone but more it is the way trustees work with staff, service users, members and other stakeholders to ensure their organisation meets the needs and objectives for which it exists and is effectively and properly run.

In The Church of Scotland trustees are all members of the Kirk Session and if appropriate congregational Boards. It is the responsibility of the trustees to ensure that good governance as applied to charities is pursued.

A STRONG BOARD

Requires, to appoint suitable persons, inform them of their duties and responsibilities, train as necessary and assess performance regularly.

The trustees require to appoint responsible officers, chairman (if not minister), clerks, treasurer, "property convenor etc, train as necessary and assess regularly.

The trustees must act prudently together AND individually in the interests of the church and ensure that individual trustees act independently of personal and other interest

Matters arising from this would include:

1. Nomination/induction procedures for new trustees
2. Ensure necessary training is kept up to date
3. Ensure that any trustee who may have a personal interest in a contract for work, declares that interest and absents him/herself from

the discussion. This would require to be minuted and noted in the annual accounts

PLANNING AND OBJECTIVES

It is the trustees' principal objective to provide financial, property and material resources to meet the objectives of the congregation into the foreseeable future.

The trustees should plan for and establish these objectives, pursue them, assess and review performance and openly account and report.

Matters arising from this would include:

- 1 Production and display of mission statement and ensuring all members are aware of it.
- 2 Sound communication with all stakeholders.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Trustees are required to identify, assess and manage significant risks likely to affect the well-being of their charity.

Risks might include for example, loss of members, loss of income, damage to assets, loss of funds, safeguarding issues and legal liabilities.

Management of these and potential other risks might involve the following:

1. Appropriate insurance cover
2. Procedures for protection of assets and funds
3. Assessment and management of health and safety,
4. Fire safety and food hygiene issues
5. Safeguarding procedures
6. Supervision of building works

Fire safety

Would include

1. Use and maintenance of smoke detectors and maintenance of fire alarms
2. Evacuation procedures
3. Emergency lighting procedure and maintenance
4. Storage of flammable materials
5. Maintenance of emergency exits
6. Fire extinguisher maintenance and use

Food Hygiene

1. Training
2. Suitability and cleanliness of equipment
3. Use of correct cleaning and dishwashing materials.
4. Food storage facilities

Safeguarding

Would include

1. Nominated person
2. Display of policy
3. Registration and re-registration
4. Training
5. Annual report to Kirk Session

Employment issues

1. Minimum wage legislation
2. PAYE registration
3. Safe working conditions Contracts of employment

Discrimination and inclusion

Would include

1. Disabled access - ramp/lifts
2. Disabled baby changing toilet facilities
3. Provision for disabled access clearly stated if not obvious

OTHER ISSUES

Presbyterial superintendence

Presbytery is required to ensure that policies are in place to cover all of the above issues and ensure good practice.

Congregations

Trustees should also be aware of the requirements of presbytery especially in relation to superintendence, and major building works.

Trustees should also be aware of the General Assembly's regulations in particular the care of buildings and congregational finance.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

Governance

NCVO (National Council of Voluntary Organisations) website

Charity Commission for England and Wales website

OSCR website

Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA) website

Law and Regulation

Church of Scotland website

Scottish Government website

Advice

Presbytery Clerk or Presbytery Treasurer