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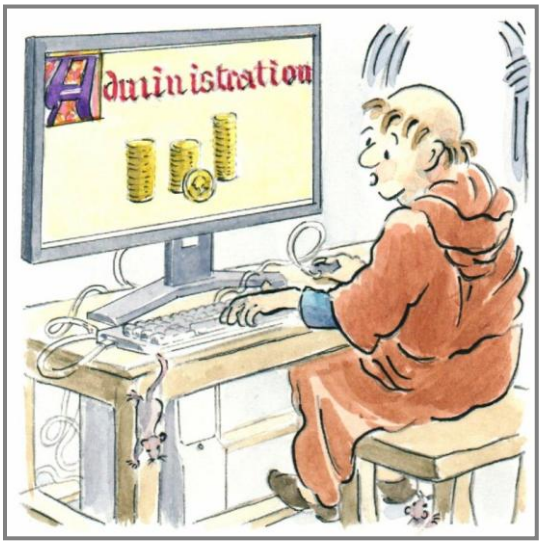

What do Church Administrators do?

Defining roles

A42 Articles series: Administration

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This article is concerned with the role of an Administrator employed by a local church.

Ministers often ask me for a Church Administrator job description they can copy, either for a new post or because their church is thinking through an existing position.

I find this seemingly straightforward request difficult to answer. There are so many factors that impact the design of such a post that I am wary of too simplistic an approach that gives a church what they want, but may not be exactly what they need.

So in this article I attempt to give the kind of practical help I am being asked for but in such a way that the recipient can shape a position that would suit their church, together with an understanding of why this is necessary. It will also be to their advantage to have to work at the design of their church's post as this will encourage ownership.

I have already sketched out the kind of differences that can exist in Training Notes TN40, *Appointing an Administrator*. Here I take the role aspect and develop it in more detail.

A: The variety of posts

There is no fixed boundary for a Church Administrator role. For example, some Administrators are responsible for the whole church website content and updating. Others may upload certain items each week, such as the news-sheet, but are not the webmaster. Others play no part at all in the website.

Again, it is common for a Church Administrator to edit and produce a weekly e-bulletin or notice-sheet. But there are churches where a member of the congregation successfully fulfils this role instead. In other churches the Minister expects to have the final say for content and layout.

Some Administrators act as the church's Book-keeper but most have no financial element in their role other than managing an office budget or petty cash. In these cases the Treasurer may look after all the book-keeping, a volunteer may act in this capacity or there may be an additional member of staff just for finance.

Larger churches may employ a Church Administrator but also an Operations Manager, an Accountant, a Bookings Secretary, a Communications Co-ordinator, a Caterer and a Caretaker. In some smaller churches the Administrator has to fulfil all these roles as best they can. See No. 6 later on this page.

The point is that there is no one fixed Church Administrator job description that everyone can copy.

Ten factors that shape the role

Here are ten factors that will shape this post. Each of these will have an impact on the boundaries around the role: what is included and what is not.

1 The denomination/tradition of the church

This article, as all on this website, is written to cover a wide variety of church denominations and traditions. But the work of an Administrator in an Anglican church with a historic building, a large graveyard and an obligation to follow ecclesiastical law needs to be different from the equivalent post in the local Newfrontiers church where they have no premises of their own, hire a school for Sunday worship, and expect to see significant changes year by year.

2 Single church or group

Many Administrators have responsibility for a single church, but some serve a group. Examples include:

- Methodist churches with a Circuit Administrator;
- rural Anglican churches where there may be a Deanery or Benefice Administrator;
- multi-site independent churches with a central administrative office base;
- churches with satellite congregations or plants.

A group responsibility adds some measure of complication to the role.

Further reading on this website

If you need a short overview of the work covered in this Article, see Training Notes TN40, *Appointing an Administrator.* If you need something more appropriate for a small church, try TN126, *The small-church administrator.*

For a more senior administrative post than described here, read Article A38, *Appointing an Operations Manager.*

3 Pioneering post or established position

Some posts will be launching a new structure. The Administrator may be the first one, or the first to be paid. That can feel very different from a position that has been around for some years and has 'settled' into a comfortable structure. First generation Administrators sometimes have to deal with opposition to their role or misunderstandings about it.

4 The official number of hours for the post

Most Church Administrators work part-time, typically 10-25 hours per week. Many have deadlines for arriving and leaving, typically school drop-off and pick-up times. This means that unfinished work has to be left or taken home. A post of 10 hours per week is going to feel quite different from a full time one.

5 The existence and location of a dedicated office

Roles will differ significantly between options such as the following:

- a church office that is tucked away in an upstairs location in a hall;
- an office right by the main entrance with significant footfall;
- an office base that is used by all church staff, not just the Administrator;
- no office at all: the Administrator works from home or the Minister's house.

6 The number and roles of other staff

In some churches the part-time Administrator works on their own. In others there may be a job share, an Assistant in post, a set of volunteers to carry much of the load but needing management, a Caretaker, a Church Manager to handle bookings, and/or even an Operations Manager to oversee the whole administrative function.

7 The availability and gifting of church members

It can make good sense to centralise all administration in one paid member of staff, but it may well be better to enable a range of volunteers to carry out some functions with the Administrator as co-ordinator, but only if suitable people exist.

Examples include having a volunteer Safeguarding Officer, Newsletter Editor, Maintenance Manager. An Administrator who takes everything over may give the church little benefit at a high cost.

8 The ability of the leader(s) to delegate

Much will depend on the capability of the Administrator but some Ministers expect the Administrator to edit and produce newsletters without their involvement at all, whereas others want to check a draft and make their own alterations at that point. The working relationship between leaders and Administrator can have a significant impact on the level of responsibility.

9 The need or otherwise for the post to be filled by a Christian

It is not at all easy to justify that a Church Administrator position should have an 'Occupational Requirement' for the post be filled by a Christian. Whether the Administrator is seen as a full member of the church's staff may depend on this point. See also pages 13/14.

10 The capability of the Administrator

The personality, gifting, experience and Christian maturity of the Administrator will have a major impact on the role. Some posts do not attract more than one applicant – and so there is a real sense in which the post sometimes needs to be fitted to whoever is available and the gifts they possess. Some Administrators are highly proficient in hi-tech strategy, others find any IT involvement a struggle.

B: How to write a good job description

The issue is not just one of variety but also of crafting the job definition in a helpful and professional way. See Article A6, *Job descriptions,* on this website. But, in summary, there need to be three parts of about equal importance.

1 The purpose for the post: or Why am I here?

2 The people-links for the post: or With whom do I work?

3 The roles within the post: or What am I responsible for?

Although Part C will describe possible content for point 3 in detail, the document itself should be no longer than two sides of A4, and ideally shorter than this. Detail can then be added as an addendum or in a separate paper. Brevity shows up the shape of the role.

The heading

The heading of a good job description can be labelled either with the post (for an appointment process) or the name of the post-holder (for an on-going position). It also needs to show:

- the office base;
- the date of the job description;
- the date when a review of it is due;
- the number of hours per week and when these are to be worked;
- the employing body.

Other terms and conditions are best left for the statutory letter of contract terms. See Article A8, *Worker agreements,* for what is required in that document.

1: The purpose for the post

It is vital to state what this should be: it provides motivation and understanding. It offers the big picture view of the post.

So it is important to work at its drafting. This may take time and need to be tweaked as the role develops. Just to express it in terms of a

summary of the responsibilities (such as, 'to manage the church office') is not good enough.

Here are four possibilities to set you thinking what you might choose.

Releasing front-line ministry

'To release the Minister and spiritual leaders for the work to which they have been called and appointed by taking as much day-to-day organisational work as is possible off them to free them for their priorities of leadership, prayer, teaching and outreach.'

This is a key idea for any Administrator position, even if not the whole picture. The idea comes from Acts 6:1-7 when the Jerusalem Church appointed seven men to handle practical matters in a dispute of the day. Many Church Administrators look to this passage as the foundation for their post and their work. This idea gives great motivation and links the back-office work with the church's front-line ministry.

Bringing excellence to organisation

'To handle the day-to-day organisational and statutory requirements of the church in such a way that the church functions safely, legally and efficiently. The aim is for the organisation itself to be hardly noticed, so that the priority ministries can be the focus knowing that all is being administered with professional excellence behind the scenes.'

The focus here is on quality, on allowing gifted organisers to play their part in the body of Christ so that the administration is so good that it goes unnoticed, an excellent test of its standard. This wording again has a link to the real work of ministry but the heart of the idea is lack of frustration and worry caused by poor administration.

Earthing administration in the vision

'To manage the administrative function of the church as a full member of the staff team. To share in the vision of the church by enabling the growth we pray for by ensuring that our systems are working in the very best way, that members can have confidence in our organisational ability, and that visitors will be dealt with in a style that matches the values of the gospel we proclaim.'

This example shows that the church's administration is a genuine and vital part of the church's ministry, contributing towards its vision, not seen as a necessary but somewhat unspiritual add-on. It also needs to be carried out with the same value-set as all other aspects of the church's life.

Demonstrating a creative approach to this work

'To be responsible for a creative approach to the operational functions of the church to support its front-line ministry, using the organisational gifts that God gives to his Church and the opportunities presented by modern technology, seeking to promote God's work in a way that is Christ-centred, prayerfully supported, servant-hearted and pastorally sensitive.'

Many people have an idea that administration is necessary but dull, wooden and desk-based. But when it is seen as serving a creator God, when it is noted that such work is included in the New Testament gifts of the Spirit, it merits a very different view which this statement attempts to demonstrate.

2: The links with other people

The second section of a good job description explains how this person is going to relate to others, showing where they fit into the complex operation of the church's life. This does not have to be more than a few bullet points but it is helpful to include the following.

The line manager(s) – and any special issues

This will be the Minister for most Church Administrators, but for some it might be a Senior Administrator or Operations Manager, and for others it might be one of the Trustees or someone in the congregation who line manages lay staff. Sometimes there can be a work line manager and a Trustee responsible for pastoral care and staff team oversight.

People who report to the post-holder – staff and volunteers

The Church Administrator may be a line manager too. In staff terms this could be for an Assistant, Book-keeper, Caretaker and/or cleaners. There may also be a team of office volunteers.

Any groups or teams they are part of – staff, admin team, etc.

This states whether the Administrator is a member of the staff team (as they should be) and any other team such as a specialist office team of some kind.

For more detail on this section's theme see Article A6, *Job descriptions,* on this website.

Any groups/committees they are members of – may be linked to previous section

It may be that the Administrator is to be in attendance at Trustees, Standing Committee or other meetings for the purpose of minute taking or for information. This is the place to state this.

This is also the appropriate place to list any expectations for meetings to attend (teams or committees): a weekly staff meeting and/or daily staff prayers, annual staff retreats, etc. as well as meetings of committees.

Specific office-holders they will need to liaise with

There will probably be other people the Administrator will need to keep in touch with: Treasurer, Church Wardens or equivalents.

External people-links

It is worth listing any groups outside the church that the Administrator will be expected to develop a relationship with: undertakers, maintenance contractors, a local press reporter or community leaders.

3: **Responsibilities or duties/tasks**

The third part of the job description, which most people feel is what it is all about but is just one of three equally important sections, lists either 'responsibilities' or 'duties/tasks'. These two ideas are quite different.

A **responsibility** assumes that the person has the ability and experience to be given an overall picture or an outcome and can work out the detail of how to achieve this themselves.

So a responsibility for the management of the church office might state:

'To manage the work of the church office so that it achieves its purpose.'

A **duty** or **task** assumes that the person needs more specific guidance than this general statement if they are to get the work done in the way expected. So a task within the management of the church office might state:

'To check stocks of stationery every week and put an order in whenever required.'

It can be seen from this that one responsibility may need a range of different tasks.

So a job description whose third section has responsibilities may have a list of up to ten or so. These may then be given in greater detail in an addendum or a separate document. But a job description with duties or tasks may need a list of 25 or more items.

If a 'responsibilities' person is given a list of duties they may lose interest because they are not being stretched. If a 'duties' person is given a list of responsibilities they may feel lost because they need specific guidance.

Many Church Administrator job descriptions veer too much towards a 'duties' approach instead of a 'responsibilities' one. In Part C I suggest a range of big-picture responsibilities and then give them each a list of sub-points, still at responsibilities level.

Categorising an Administrator role

To create a short list of responsibilities you need to categorise the job into distinct elements. What might these be, bearing in mind that any one post will need to be shaped by the requirements from what can only be a general list to cover all possibilities?

Articles A33 and A34, *Roles for a church office,* give:

- Reception point
- Communications hub
- Staff shield
- Community interface
- Volunteers base
- Administrative work-station.

This could also form one type of categorisation for a Church Administrator.

Here is a more detailed list:

- To provide high-quality administrative services for the church.
- To act as a focus for church life, a communications hub where questions are answered, data is stored and information disseminated.
- To protect the Minister/clergy and other staff from as much routine business and unnecessary interruption as possible.
- To be the church's interface with the outside world, providing a neutral and unthreatening point of contact;
- To manage a reception point for the church plant, especially in a church centre that is let out to a variety of external groups.
- To act as an on-site trouble-shooter for maintenance and equipment issues.

- To manage the membership records and people's ministry overseeing the work of the volunteers in the church.
- To act as on-site Book-keeper for the finances of the church reporting to the Treasurer.
- To oversee all the resources and operations of the church, managing staff and ensuring the implementation of the strategic plan.

That final bullet takes us into the area of an Operations Manager. In Article A38, *Appointing an Operations Manager,* categorisations for that more senior post are:

- To turn the vision into reality.
- To enable continual change for effectiveness.
- To manage people well.
- To co-ordinate all aspects of organisation.
- To release the pastoral staff for church growth.

Part C of this article which follows on below gives the following categorisations for a Church Administrator role which combines elements of all the above:

1 Office manager - the Administrator role

2 Minister support - EA/PA role

3 Communications hub - information role

4 Rooms hire and events - activities role

5 Initial contact - outward-facing role

6 Volunteers mobilisation - manager role.

There is of course overlap between these and other categorisation schemes are possible. The point is NOT that a typical Church Administrator functions in all these areas but that this is one possible way of defining what the job might include in a way that brings clarity to the role.

Note that finance is listed within the 'Office manager' role but if this is a major element of the post (which is unusual, unless the post is that of a financial specialist), it might be better in its own category. Similarly the organisation of events is given within the 'Rooms hire' role – although it is a different element.

The value of negatives

Within a job description, either in the purpose or responsibilities section, it can be helpful to define boundaries by listing any responsibilities that are not included in the post, though some might expect them to be or behave as though they were.

For a Church Administrator, typical points would include the issue of Sunday work when present at services, pastoral needs for those who come to the office, and whether church office-holders or any staff member can ask the Administrator for their skills and time.

C: A listing of possible roles

This third and detailed part of the article lists every responsibility any Administrator might have, in such a way to help any church select from the list to create their own.

These roles are listed to highlight particular aspects of the post.

The titles shown are simply descriptive of the role and not necessarily an indication of the title for the post itself. So listing an 'office manager' role does not necessarily imply a post titled 'Office Manager', nor necessarily one as senior as that title might imply. The roles obviously overlap so details shown under one role may fit almost equally well under another.

In short, these are responsibilities grouped into roles, not posts. Most Church Administrator appointments (other than specialist ones) will encompass aspects from several of these.

Although the role of receptionist is a major one for most Administrator appointments, this is not given a separate section but brought into each of them as appropriate. It is often overlooked in job descriptions but can take a significant amount of the Administrator's time, and because of its random nature can prove disruptive for other aspects of their work.

Under each of the roles there are three sections.

1 **Overview**

This is the overall responsibility for this role. This might be all that appears on the job description, or it might be slightly

augmented from what follows. In each case there is a 'so…' phrase to provide some idea of outcome.

2 **Specific responsibilities**

A list of ten possible responsibilities is suggested to explain how the overview item works out in practice. Although these might appear on a job description, it may be better for some of them to be shown in an addendum, or in a separate and more detailed paper.

3 **Possible options**

These are additional responsibilities that may be added to this role but will not apply to many people. Some will he handled separately by volunteers, some may be irrelevant for your church, some will be handled by an Operations Manager if you have that post on the staff.

The list is followed by some possible prohibitions as already explained: these are always useful in a job description to help define boundaries.

Any specific wording here is for illustrative purposes and will need to be adapted. Some of the ideas will not be right for your church.

What follows is NOT a model list of responsibilities but a comprehensive listing of almost everything possible. The idea is to select what your Administrator role might consist of.

1: **Office manager role**

This heading groups work related to the church office that might be termed administrative, but leaves issues of Sunday worship, communication and links with people outside the church to other headings that follow.

Overview

To oversee and develop the ministry of the church office and its systems as an efficient, welcoming and effective centre of the church's organisational life for staff, members and visitors, whether in person or digitally, so that the office fulfils its servant purpose without undue stress or fuss.

Specific responsibilities

1.1 Take responsibility for the **reception** function of manning the church office at its stated opening times (whether in person or through members of the volunteers team), the answering of the phone and the responses to emails and web-forms. Arrange holiday cover for this as necessary.

1.2 Oversee the use of the **church management system** (CMS) to ensure that this software is used effectively throughout the church and that the rota systems within it are properly supporting services and other activities.

1.3 Manage the church **database** within this to ensure that it is updated on a weekly basis, developed as appropriate, and kept secure at all times within all data protection requirements,

1.4 Maintain and update the (paper, digital, website) **church diary** for all activities including Sunday services. Manage the annual calendar of events. Be responsible for triggering reminders for seasonal and one-off actions for the staff team and office-holders. *(See section 4 below for room bookings.)*

1.5 Ensure that the **office** itself is kept secure, clean and tidy for effective use with proper IT back-up systems in place. Maintain proper use of the Dropbox facility (or whatever) and other software packages in use. Keep all procedural manuals updated.

1.6 Oversee the church **office equipment** (computers, printers, copiers, telecoms, etc.), ensuring proper maintenance, monitoring leasing arrangements, checking PAT testing, paying software subscriptions and instructing volunteers in proper use.

1.7 Ensure that all **maintenance contracts** are running correctly, and oversee all service and maintenance visits for the church's heating, electrical equipment, organ tuning, fire safety equipment, etc.

1.8 Be the first point of contact over **routine maintenance** and vandalism issues within the church plant, handling minor matters as appropriate and reporting immediately to the Plant and Groups Team over any significant actions that are necessary and any concerns over health and safety. *(See also 5.11.)*

1.9 Be responsible for ordering and holding **supplies**, including church service requirements, office stationery, stewardship materials, janitorial requirements and catering supplies, regularly checking possible group discount schemes.

1.10 Oversee the church's **environmental policy** for recycling and waste handling.

Possible options

Note: some of these would be the responsibility of an Accountant or Operations Manager if such posts exist.

1.11 Act as Church **Book-keeper** under the Treasurer, ensuring all payments are properly authorised, bills paid within a week wherever possible, the church credit card used correctly, receipts and payments properly recorded in the software package, appropriate reports produced, fees collected, offertory boxes emptied and counted, cash banked regularly, etc. Oversee all cash handling and counting.

1.12 Assist the Treasurer in the production of management and final **accounts**, and in the budget process, communicating with budget holders and being directly responsible for the office budget.

1.13 Ensure that all **insurance policies** for the church are correct and up-to-date, and that risk is managed at an acceptable level, acting as main point of contact with the church's insurance company.

1.14 Ensure that there is **compliance** with all necessary legislation affecting policies on health and safety, safeguarding, data protection, employment, contractors on site, finance, etc. and keep the staff handbook updated as necessary. Draft and review all church policies. Ensure all denominational statutory requirements (eg. meeting notice) are adhered to.

1.15 Work with (or act as) the **Secretary** to ensure that agendas, papers and minutes/reports for meetings of trustees and specified leadership/governance groups are distributed on time, with minutes taken at meetings and distributed promptly.

1.16 Act as Secretary for the weekly **staff meetings** ensuring notes with action points are distributed on the same day. Take part in staff prayers.

1.17 Oversee **car parking** in the church car park, controlling permits and mid-week, external usage.

1.18 Offer **administrative support** to (named) church organisations: playgroup, small groups structure, etc.

1.19 Seek the **improvement** of all structures and systems in use and adapt them to changing needs.

Possible exclusions

'You are not responsible for counselling needs for church members who call in at the office but are to arrange appropriate care through the pastoral staff and team. Neither are you responsible for printing or running errands for church office holders other than where this has been agreed in advance with your line manager.'

2: **Minister support role**

This heading includes all work that would be termed PA (Personal Assistant) or EA (Executive Assistant) and anything related to Sunday worship such as service materials.

Overview

To support and protect the Minister *(and, possibly, selected other staff)* as required in an EA/PA role, so they are released to focus on their priority ministries. This to be achieved through diary management, communications on his/her behalf, reminders of deadlines, and other forms of administrative back-up, in particular in support for Sunday services.

Specific responsibilities

2.1 Hold the Minister's (digital) **diary**, arranging meetings and booking appointments, ensuring the Minister has all the documentation required for each engagement, arranging travel where necessary and protecting him/her for study and time off.

2.2 Provide **secretarial services** on the Minister's behalf: letters, emails, telephoning, copying, filing.

2.3 Set up **meetings** as instructed by the Minister using appropriate software, both those for the church and those that church members attend with others. Support the Minister's involvement in school governors and denominational meetings with provision of papers, etc.

2.4 Assist as required with the arrangements for Sunday and other **worship services** which the Minister is leading including liaison with church office holders, and communication with all taking part through the management of rotas on the church management software.

2.5 Prepare **presentation slides** (PowerPoint) and liturgical software for services and sermons under the direction of the Minister.

2.6 Handle arrangements for **special services** and events including baptisms, marriages, funerals, parade services and festivals. This includes enquiries, bookings, ensuring banns announcements are read and dealing with undertakers. Oversee production of printed orders of service for special events. *(See also 5.3.)*

2.7 Maintain all **legal registers** for services, baptisms, marriages, funerals and ensure the correct recording and handling of fees received to include registers, certificates and the availability of all necessary materials. Maintain the book of remembrance.

2.8 Process **newcomer/visitor** information from Sunday services: sorting the cards, sending out welcome letters, informing clergy and Visiting Team, inviting newcomers to the quarterly welcome evenings and arranging catering for those.

2.9 Oversee the **copyright licensing systems** (CCLI) for the church and all special licences for events, ensuring that all necessary records are kept and returns made on schedule.

2.10 Ensure that all **statutory documents** for the Minister/church are dealt with properly including statistical returns, personal data protection registration, faculties, etc.

Possible options

2.11 Provide similar support to that listed above for the **Associate Minister** and/or selected other staff, and/or selected office-holders.

2.12 Undertake **research** for the Minister's teaching ministry as requested.

2.13 Project manage specific **events** or schemes on behalf of the Minister or other staff.

2.14 Maintain the **staff holiday** schedules and ensure there is clergy cover for all activities.

2.15 (Note that if weddings or funerals are a major feature of church life, there may need to be more detail for 2.6 above.)

Possible exclusions

'This is a service to the Minister alone and you are not expected to offer similar services to other staff or office-holders unless so authorised *(in which case see 2.11)*. You are however expected to maintain absolute discretion in dealing with pastoral and sensitive matters of which you have privileged knowledge.'

3: Communications hub role

This groups any work related to communications throughout the church.

Overview

To act as the central reference point for church members for all information, data storage and internal messaging, overseeing the church's strategy on communication via spoken word, print, email, web and social media. Managing the office as a communications hub for the church so that everyone knows and understands what they need to know and when they need to know it, so minimising frustration and uncertainty.

Specific responsibilities

3.1 Maintain personally a good working **knowledge and understanding** of the church's overall ministry, its history, its membership and groupings, its worship styles and theological position, its vision and purpose, its current events programme, its staff and its buildings.

3.2 Oversee the church office **reception** facility with help from any assistant team, ensuring people are dealt with politely, efficiently and never let down by lack of appropriate response. Within this handle all enquiries and messages, passing on information as necessary. Ensure all communications are answered within the times agreed.

3.3 Edit and produce the **weekly news-sheet** in both print and web versions, ensuring it is produced and finished to its normal standard, on schedule and with large print copies available.

3.4 Produce the **monthly newsletter** and bimonthly prayer diary on receipt of final pages from the Editors and ensure distribution to groups and individuals as on the circulation lists.

3.5 Update the church **website** each week with relevant changes, including the uploading of notice-sheets, information on current programmes (such as sermon series, courses, etc.) and service/sermon recordings.

3.6 Manage regular **mail-outs** to church members through the church management system and/or by Mailchimp or equivalent by both email and text, and to prepare and print flyers and programme cards as advised by those authorised to pass these on to you for production.

3.7 Be responsible for the church directory, programme cards, online database, production of annual reports, content on scrolling screens at services, notice-boards and other **means of internal communication**. *(See also 5.3.)*

3.8 Compile the **annual reports** from activity leaders and edit the whole document before copying and distributing it to all members.

3.9 Manage and improve the church's **filing system**: paper, IT files, emails, etc. ensuring that all items are held for the required periods of time, necessary records are then archived and others shredded, and that there is strict compliance with current data protection and safeguarding legislation on filing.

3.10 Be responsible for the church's **branding**, logo, design features and the monitoring and improvement of all the communications output.

Possible options

3.11 Oversee the church's main **social media** outputs (Facebook page and Twitter feeds), posting relevant information every day and ensuring those responsible are monitoring content adequately.

3.12 Oversee the updating of the church's web and **social media policy**, liaising with leaders of all young people's groups in particular. Act as moderator for the church web forums to ensure there is no inappropriate content.

3.13 Co-ordinate the work of the **small groups** by arranging leaders' meetings, circulating study notes and informing leaders of newcomers wishing to join a group. Co-ordinate the church's groups and activities to ensure that everything is working towards one common vision.

3.14 Keep in regular contact with **other churches in the group** (where this applies) to co-ordinate activities and minimise diary clashes.

3.15 Monitor and update the **procedures manual** for all aspects of the Administrator's role.

3.16 Take responsibility for advising on a **communications strategy** for the church.

Possible exclusions

'When receiving complaints about any aspect of church communication you are to report these immediately to the convenor of the Communications Team and should not answer these directly yourself unless authorised to do so.'

4: **Rooms hire and events role**

This heading covers two distinct but related areas: that of managing the letting of rooms, and the organisation of specific events.

Overview

To manage the letting scheme for the church plant according to the relevant strategic paper and within the budgets that are set, building and maintaining excellent relations with all hirers so that the church makes a positive impact for Christ in the local community. To organise and manage major church events and courses.

Specific responsibilities

4.1 Be the first **point of contact** for hirers, potential hirers and users in person, by phone and by email, offering advice and information as the representative of the church and therefore of the Christian faith.

4.2 Act as resident **receptionist** for all users of the building so that queries can be answered and everyone made to feel at home while security is maintained. Show potential hirers round the premises and promote church activities and way-in courses wherever possible. *(See also 1.1, 3.2, 5.2.)*

4.3 Oversee **lettings** contracts, performance licences, insurances, security, key-holding, negotiation of fees where permissible and all billing and payment of invoices. (See Article A28 on this website, *Rooms to let*, for more detail of all these points,).

4.4 Ensure rooms are **prepared** on time for every letting, working with the Caretaker, that the premises are kept clean and tidy, and that kitchen usage is in line with all necessary hygiene requirements and church guidelines.

4.5 Ensure that any refreshments and **catering packages** are promoted accurately and delivered efficiently within budget, whether by the church or by external contractors.

4.6 **Market** the church's facilities in all appropriate ways with the aim of growing its use and place in the local community and dealing efficiently with all enquiries. Oversee website content and any printed brochures or flyers as part of this.

4.7 Ensure that no lettings are made to clients who do not fall within the **church guidelines** for external activities. Manage all lettings to avoid unnecessary conflicts of usage, overbooking, or any irregularities, resolving any difficulties with grace and firmness.

4.8 Ensure all **risk assessments** and statutory requirements are completed and updated as necessary.

4.9 Assisting in the organisation of **major church events** (weekends away, social events, concerts, etc.) as part of the Organising Team for each event, handling promotion, bookings, payments, etc.

4.10 Organise church **courses** (Alpha-style, marriage and family courses, etc.) including their promotion and bookings.

Possible options

4.11 **Line manage** the church cleaners, Caretaker, Caterer, etc. with due thoroughness to enable the whole team to be the best that they can be. *(See also 6.3.)*

4.12 Oversee **key holding** arrangements and access codes, ensuring final security at night.

4.13 Administer **tenancy agreements** and rental arrangements for church property that is let out, reporting to the Treasurer.

Possible exclusions

'You should never put yourself in a position of unnecessary danger in dealing with church visitors and should report any incidents or problems with a church user immediately to your line manager. The church will not tolerate any behaviour by hirers or users that constitutes abuse in any form of any employee.'

5: Initial contact role

The Administrator plays a key role as the first point of contact with those who approach the church during the week. This heading takes different aspects of this vital responsibility.

Overview

To act as the first point of contact for all midweek (external) church enquiries whether in person or by telephone, post, email, website response or social media. To be the key representative of the church to all non-members as a neutral and unthreatening entry point to the church, so that all visitors and enquirers have a positive view of our Christian community and our faith in Jesus Christ.

Specific responsibilities

5.1 Have a broad **understanding** of the kind of issues raised by visitors (such as matters to do with the history and architecture of the church building, the positioning of graves, Sunday services, baptisms, etc.) so that the Minister does not have to be bothered by simple enquiries in these areas.

5.2 Be responsible for **reception** in the church office so that all visitors receive a warm welcome whether in person, by phone, from the website, etc. Be the 'face' of the church to the public on signboards and website so that there is a straightforward way-in for information and advice.

5.3 Arrange for people seeking **baptism, marriage or other needs** to meet the Minister at weekly interview times or at special appointments. *(See also 2.6.)*

5.4 Produce to schedule all **promotional print** including Christmas and Easter leaflets for distribution, possibly working alongside others who decide on content and design. *(See also 3.7.)*

5.5 Design and produce the **welcome pack**, booking forms and other documentation that are simple, easy to understand and prepared with sensitivity.

5.6 Use external signboards, the website and other means to promote the work of the

church to the **local community** and all visitors looking for ways to explain the Good News whenever possible.

5.7 Ensure **voicemail messages**, emails and website enquiry forms are dealt with in accordance with our stated policy and answered within the times set out there to create a positive and consistent witness.

5.8 Act as the church's main **contact point** with postal workers, maintenance engineers, meter readers, contractors on site, officers from the local authority, etc.

5.9 Oversee the administration of any **graveyards** and other historical records and conduct appropriate searches for enquirers to find information within the terms of the guidance paper.

5.10 Liaise with the Plant and Grounds Team to ensure that the **outside** of the church building is properly maintained, the church grounds kept tidy, and the building seen as a good witness to the local area.

Possible options

5.11 Ensure minor **building maintenance work** is put in hand under the guidance of the Plant and Grounds Team, obtaining financial quotations, overseeing contractors on site, signing off work when complete. *(See also 1.8.)*

5.12 Offer appropriate **compassionate ministry** to vulnerable adults and homeless visitors within the guidelines laid down for both your safety and appropriate means of support.

5.13 Oversee a ministry to **tourists**, line managing volunteers to man the church, ensuring that there are adequate supplies of promotional leaflets, editing the webpage as necessary, liaising with the local tourist information office and other appropriate agencies.

5.14 Oversee the church **bookstall/café/shop**, being responsible for, or liaising with those responsible for it, stocking levels of all items, accounts, etc.

5.15 Act as the church's **media officer**, putting out regular media releases and seeking coverage in local newspapers and radio. Monitor entries in denominational and local directories and websites as well as in the local press.

Possible exclusions

The note to section 4 also applies here. Also: 'You are also not expected to spend inappropriate amounts of time searching for graveyard or historical records when demanded by researchers, but should report any difficulties to your line manager.'

6: Volunteer mobilisation role

Many Administrators enable the church's volunteer workers in some way although much of what is listed here is more likely to fall to the role of an Operations Manager.

Overview

To oversee safeguarding within the church and line manage the assistant church office team and other administrative staff (paid and volunteers) to enable each member to reach their full potential.

Specific responsibilities

6.1 Act as the church **Safeguarding Officer** in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy, maintaining and updating all records accurately and securely, and taking all necessary and appropriate action whenever any issues arise.

6.2 Ensure that each person who works with **children or vulnerable adults**, especially one-off in seasonal activities, has current authorisation to do so.

6.3 Line manage selected **other paid staff**: Assistant Administrators, Caretaker/ Verger, cleaners, etc. ensuring regular meetings, twice-annual reviews, setting of targets, encouragement and reprimand as necessary. *(See also 4.11.)*

6.4 Ensure all **employment paperwork** (job descriptions, person profiles, letters of contract terms) are up-to-date, monitored appropriately and filed securely.

6.5 Work in association with, or act as, the church's **HR Officer**, ensuring that all employment matters are organised and actioned appropriately.

6.6 Recruit, line manage and develop a team of **volunteer staff** for the church office as appropriate. Also any volunteers for church and/or grounds maintenance. Lead any team so created and have overall responsibility for its performance.

For the equivalent roles for a church office, read Articles A33 and A34, *Roles for a church office – six perspectives*, on this website.

6.7 Write and develop suitable **volunteer 'contracts'** for those who work in the office, building or grounds, and hold all such paperwork securely in the office.

6.8 Work in association with, or act as, the church's **Health and Safety Officer**, reporting to the Trustees at least twice a year on all actions taken.

6.9 Ensure the **safety** of self and of all who work under you, keeping to the guidelines laid down in the Lone Workers' Policy, the management of the CCTV system, appropriate security features of the church office and building where you work, etc.

6.10 As part of the **newcomers' process**, arrange for an interview with them to determine gifting, experience and availability.

Possible options

6.11 Maintain the church **database** to include everyone's gifting/experience/availability and current ministry roles.

6.12 Be responsible for the mobilisation and management of **all volunteer labour** within the church.

6.13 (Note that if there are specific responsibilities for aspects of HR *(see 6.6 above)* these may need more detail.)

Possible exclusions

'You are not responsible for finding church members to join ministry teams other than putting out announcements in publications you are responsible for. In this and all areas your purpose is not to take work off volunteers where tasks are being carried out effectively, but to co-ordinate and manage such work.'

Creating a list of responsibilities

Reminder: The idea of the above list is ***not*** to create 91 responsibilities but to give you a sense of what is possible so that you can select, perhaps, eight or nine top level responsibilities which go on the job description. You might then want to explain these in a separate section or another paper by giving a list of sub-responsibilities under each of those, as has been done in the above.

But the point is that it is up to you to build the job description from the range of possible building blocks listed here. You may even want to add one or two not included because they are specific to your church. But be aware that the scope of the job must fit the hours for the post. What is given above is far too much for even a full time role. Remember too that a good job description fills no more than two sides of A4.

D: Person profile and other documents

This article has focused on the job description, but an even more important statement is the person profile (some talk of a 'person specification'). Finding the right kind of person may prove more productive than getting the job exactly right. But of course the two go together: a particular job will demand a certain type of person.

Here is an analysis of how you might express a person profile for a Church Administrator. Once again, this is an attempt to cover almost every possibility. Your job is to select only those items that are relevant for your post, and then it is helpful to list each one you have chosen as either 'Essential' or 'Desirable'.

Each church will have a different list so there can be no pro forma to copy. But the person profile needs to remain current throughout the employment. It is a permanent, not a temporary, document.

Employing a Christian

There is one particular issue that needs to be highlighted. Is it essential that you appoint a Christian to this post – and should they be a worshipping member of your church?

Many churches feel that as long as you slap on a statement saying there is an Occupational Requirement (which used to be known as a Genuine Occupational Requirement or GOR) for the post-holder to be a Christian you are covered.

You are not. You will have to justify the need, and though straightforward for a Youth Worker or Pastoral Assistant, it is not so easy for an Administrator. For more on this read Training Notes TN92 on this website, *How genuine are your GORs?* You will have to add some points to any job description to justify an OR for the post.

Categories for a person profile

Those suggested are:

- Christian character (assuming you can justify an Occupational Requirement)
- Qualifications
- Personal qualities
- Gifting / skills / understanding
- Work/church experience

Several items will need adapting to fit your church, or some have several terms for you to choose the most appropriate one. The point is NOT just to copy this list (which is too long for any one statement anyway).

Opening statement

Mention of supporting the ethos/vision of the church and working within its policies relating to health and safety, safeguarding, etc.

Christian character

(if there is an Occupational Requirement (OR) for the post)

Someone who is:

- a disciple of Jesus Christ, seeking to grow in maturity;
- willing to worship in this church *(if so)*;
- acknowledged to be full of the Spirit with wisdom and discernment;
- happy to affirm the vision / values / ethos / tradition / doctrinal statement;
- showing not only administrative gifts but also the fruit of the Spirit;
- a good ambassador for the faith to all visitors to the office;
- seeking to pray for the ministry of the church and the office;
- seeking to maintain a good balance between time for self/family/friends and church work;
- showing respect for the decisions of the church's leaders;
- willing to develop in character and integrity through honest and ongoing feedback.

Qualifications

With an ability to show evidence for:

- a good all-round education with high GCSE/A level grades;
- relevant NVQ/SVQ qualifications to level 3; high levels of accuracy in spoken and written English;
- degree/diploma/post-graduate qualifications;
- secretarial/business/software usage qualifications;
- the right to work in the UK and any necessary DBS checks;
- any requirement for current driving licence.

Personal qualities

Someone who can show:

- high levels of motivation to work well on their own without supervision;
- high levels of initiative and wise decision-making;
- energy and the ability to cope with work peaks in a busy office;
- evidence of a creative mind to tackling problems that arise;
- outstanding people-skills in a customer care context: in person, by email and on the phone;
- a welcoming attitude, being open to people while coping with a task list;
- a sense of warmth and humour, being very approachable;
- clear evidence of being a team-worker – seeking to serve the whole group;
- the ability to manage and cope with change and the unpredictable;
- a seeking after high quality while working with limited resources;
- an eye for the big picture as well as the daily detail;

- high levels of self-awareness / EI, acting with discretion and keeping all confidences;
- utter reliability for deadlines, commitments and handling cash;
- respect for diversity and a commitment to equal opportunities;
- an empathetic listener, able to put stressed people at ease;
- a resilient and diplomatic person, able to cope with difficult customers with patience.

Gifting / skills / understanding

Note: there is overlap between this and the previous heading.

Someone who is:

- a meticulous organiser with exceptional levels of accuracy, time-keeping and attention to detail;
- an excellent communicator, both written and oral;
- a highly competent keyboard/IT worker with a good knowledge of website technology/design;
- proficient in the use of Office software: Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook, Access, Publisher;
- proficient in working with church management system software and/or accountancy packages;
- a gifted pioneer, able to develop a role from scratch;
- a clear and calm thinker, able to manage tight deadlines;
- a good multi-tasker, able to spin several plates at once;
- an excellent planner and scheduler, being able to prioritise well;
- a person with good overall knowledge of matters of legal compliance and risk management;
- a person who understands health and safety legislation;
- willing to undertake some limited evening and weekend work;

For more detail on selecting staff, see Article A17, *Staff selection step-by-step.* And on gifting, see Training Notes TN115, *Identifying gifts of administration.* Both on this website.

- sensitive to different ethnic, theological and age groups.

There is an expectation of regular in-house and external training to develop the skill-set

Work/church experience

Someone with experience of:

- holding administrative offices in churches;
- structures and systems of a church of (denomination);
- administrative systems in an office environment;
- acting as a PA/EA to an executive member of an organisation's staff;
- website and social media use (especially Facebook and Twitter);
- team working/leading/project leading;
- volunteer and/or premises management.

Other possible documentation

Papers sent to applicants

When advertising a new post or a vacancy in an existing one, you would expect to produce a simple pack of materials to be sent to applicants. This might include:

1 **An introduction to the post**

"We are looking to appoint a gifted administrator…." with some idea of the overall purpose of the role, the scope of the post and a short summary of the person profile. You might explain if this is a new post, an altered one, or a continuation of a present role and why this is now vacant.

2 **An outline of the church and its ministry**

"Christ Church is….." with something about its size, denomination, tradition, priorities, congregation, area, staffing (especially administrative staffing), etc.

Think of what an applicant who had no knowledge of the church would need to know to understand the context for this post. Include here the church's future plans and its vision. You might want also to reference other information on the church website.

3 **A brief description of the office**

"The post will be based in …." to help applicants visualise the working base.

4 **An outline of terms and conditions**

This is not the place for all the details in the statement of contract terms, but might outline the hours and pattern of work, line management arrangements, salary, pension arrangements, leave, any probationary period and, vitally, any wording required for an Occupational Requirement for the post-holder to be a Christian and justification for this.

If this requirement exists, information about whether the post-holder will be expected to be a member of the church's Sunday congregation.

5 **Process for applications**

How to apply with an application form if this means is being used and not letter and CV, deadline date, date for interviews, requirements for referees and when they will be approached, whom to contact for further information and all contact details (address, phone, email).

6 **The job description in full**

Perhaps as a separate paper

7 **The person profile in full**

Perhaps as a separate paper

A set of aims

It is helpful to have a set of 'aims' or 'projects' or 'priorities' for a given period of time, normally one year but it could be six months. These should normally be agreed at an appraisal and then monitored throughout the period in question so would not be written until the post-holder had their first proper review.

A job description is reasonably static (it may be tweaked at review times but a major shift has legal implications). But a set of aims is deliberately limited in time to the period in question, and designed to focus the job description or specifics within it for that time.

Such aims may focus on tasks (such as 'to review our use of social media and make recommendations for future use'), on relationships (such as 'to develop the office volunteers into an effective team with everyone valuing each other's contribution') or on personal development (such as 'to find and attend an appropriate training course in customer care skills').

Such aims may be linked to specific targets, often fixed dates by which to achieve elements of the aim.

A set of standards or customer care policy

It can be helpful to set standards required for outputs. These may form part of a customer care policy for the church office or it may be termed a 'service level agreement'. If these exist they should be sent to applicants rather than produced on arrival in the job. Here are some examples:

- 'To respond to all voicemail messages within two hours of the next office opening time.'
- 'To respond to all office emails within 48 hours.'
- 'To ensure that the weekly notice-sheet has been uploaded to the website by Friday 3.00 pm.'
- 'To show respect for every visitor to the office.'

For more detail on the issue of customer care, see Training Note TN86, *Customer care for churches?,* on this website.

For more on Lone Worker Policies (see below), read Training Notes TN85, *Preparing a Lone Worker Policy.*

A range of policy documents

It is important that churches have all necessary risk assessments and policies in place when employing administrative staff. Examples of policies include:

- health and safety policy (including fire safety, working at heights, etc.);
- lone worker policy;
- safeguarding policy;
- data protection policy/GDPR;
- internet/texting/social media policy;
- equality / diversity policy;
- environmental policy;
- expenses claims policy and procedures;
- various employment policies;
- various financial policies.

For a detailed listing of church policies see Training Notes TN111, *A church policies checklist.*

This article is designed to help churches set up or review an Administrator position with due care and understanding. It does not provide a pro-forma job description because it is important to shape the post to the needs, and these will differ from church to church. But it does provide all the basic ideas you will need, with sample wording, to define the post and describe the person to be appointed.

Further reading reminder: if you have a more senior post in mind, read Article A38, *Appointing an Operations Manager.* If you want guidance on what spiritual gifts of administration may look like in someone, read Training Notes TN115, *Identifying gifts of administration,* which is a cut-down version of Health-checks 8 & 9, *A Gift Assessment for Administrators.*

This article is available at https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Articles-index then A42. See also Articles A33/34, *Roles for a church office,* and A38, *Appointing an Operations Manager*, plus Training Notes TN40, *Appointing an Administrator,* TN102, *People who visit the church office,* TN115, *Identifying gifts of administration,* and TN126, *The small-church administrator.* The text of this article has also mentioned Articles A6, A8, A17, and Training Notes TN85, TN86, TN92.

If your church has an Administrator ensure they are a member of the UK Church Administrators Network (UCAN): https://www.churchadministrators.net.

John's resources are marked for filing categories of Leadership, Management, Structures, Planning, Communication, Administration. File A42 under Administration.

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