

The Parish Church of St Laurence, Ludlow

Volunteer Network: 'St Laurence's Angels'

A guide to volunteering at St Laurence's



September 2017

From the Rector – The Rev'd Kelvin Price

I'd like to personally thank you for commitment to the life of St Laurence's; as a thriving market town community, we are so blessed in so many ways, and



having such a magnificent church is just one of them. As we all know, St Laurence's isn't your average parish church, we're the 7th most visited free visitor attraction in the West Midland and one of the top 200 visitor attractions in the UK. Being so popular brings incredible opportunities, but also challenges, without our network of 150 volunteers, we would not be able to offer the warm welcome and hospitality that we pride ourselves on.

As Rector, I can't be everywhere all the time, and I can't act as the first point of contact for volunteers. Our key members of staff and the various volunteer group co-ordinators and leaders fulfil this vital role on my behalf. Each week I meet with the Churchwardens and senior staff make necessary decisions and to provide direction for the organisation as a whole. My time in the army helped me to understand the importance of teamwork, trusting those who you delegate to and the importance of everyone taking responsibility for carrying out their individual roles.

When I first arrived in September 2016, I could see the scale of operations at St Laurence's was much more complex than a normal church; in fact in this sense we have much more in common with a cathedral. This volunteer handbook contains all you need to know about volunteering at St Laurence's. Along with the individual role descriptions it will really help in providing a better understanding of your role within the organisation as a whole. I know first-hand the importance of a strong team, of good communication and thorough briefing, and I hope you too can experience this.

All information regarding volunteering can be found on our website also. Volunteer co-ordinators play a vital part in ensuring good communication, they help to pass information up and down the chain, making sure that everyone plays their part to the best of their abilities. Please make sure that you understand what is asked of you and direct all queries through your group co-ordinator.

I would like to thank you in advance for being a 'St Laurence's Angels' and I ask you to remember that the success of our network relies on:

- Mutual support
- Appreciating and respecting each other's individual skills
- Giving of our time and talents freely
- Giving the best of ourselves to promote St Laurence's and the work of our community

We hope you enjoy your time volunteering at St Laurence's. Please remember, that only a few people see the totality of the operation, as a major church neither I, nor the churchwardens, can oversee the individual activities of the volunteers on a day to day basis, we rely on our Church Executive Manager (CEM) and the many group co-ordinators to ensure effective communications and operations.

Thank you for your commitment to work as part of the St Laurence team. I hope you too can gain the satisfaction of knowing you are part of something greater than the sum of our individual parts.

Kelvin

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1. About us: St Laurence's Church

St Laurence's is an inclusive Church, at its heart a living community which has born witness to the Christian faith in the Marches for over 800 years. We are the parish church for the historic town of Ludlow; open every day of the year, we hope to offer a warm welcome and hospitality to visitors, concert goers, the wider community and pilgrims alike.

Unlike many historic buildings our church is still used for its original purpose and this gives it a tangible sense of place. We work closely with the independent charity the Conservation Trust for St Laurence's (Ludlow Palmer's) to maintain and secure the church for the future.

Our volunteer network, St Laurence's Angels, consists of over 150+ people, it encompasses over 35 different roles, carrying out 300 tasks/slots. We welcome over 100, 000 people each year as visitors, pilgrims and customers at events.

The Parish Church Council recognises its responsibilities to volunteers. Clear lines of management and communication, as outlined in the handbook, are there to make sure St Laurence's runs as smoothly as possible and that your time with us is enjoyable and productive. We value your co-operation and thank you for your commitment.

2. Welcome to volunteering at St Laurence's

As part of St Laurence's Angels, you are a valued part of the organisation working with other volunteers and staff to create a professional and friendly environment for visitors, caring for our church and enabling use of our facilities by the wider community. In return for your time, abilities and energy, we hope to give you an opportunity to develop your skills and interests, make new friends and to make a satisfying contribution as you help us achieve our aims.

The purpose of this handbook is to give you a broader picture of the work of St Laurence's and of the role of the volunteer. It should help answer

some of your questions. Please take time to read through this guide. The volunteer handbook and the role descriptions are also important to ensure that the PCC is meeting its statutory responsibilities i.e. insurance, health and safety and child protection.

All volunteers should receive a relevant role description and any training required for the role that they wish to undertake. If you have any questions or need further advice please let us know. When you start to volunteer we will endeavour to ensure that you work alongside an experienced volunteer, who will help you to find your feet. Remember you are part of a team.

Volunteers give their time freely to support the work of St Laurence's and, although not paid, are greatly valued. By volunteering at St Laurence's, it is assumed that you have consented to the terms laid out in your role description. This mutual agreement may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party and does not create an employment relationship either now or at any time in the future.

You can see the full extent of our volunteer network at the end of this handbook.

3. What it means to volunteer

We offer you

- A chance to serve and help improve our community
- The opportunity to perform meaningful, necessary tasks
- A chance to receive the experience of a professional environment
- Training related to your volunteer role
- Opportunities for personal growth and development
- Recognition of a job well done
- Opportunities for new friendships
- A shared stake in the success of the church
- Mutual respect and reciprocal appreciation of motivation, expertise and interests

We ask you

- To respect to the Christian values of the church
- To follow the procedures and standards for volunteer work
- To serve as ambassadors for the St Laurence's
- To keep confidential information not in the public domain
- To participate in training programmes
- To be prompt and reliable in reporting for duty
- To observe the same standards of professional practice as your colleagues
- To notify the church as early as possible if unable to carry out your role.
- If possible, to give the church at least 3 weeks' notice of your holidays, or your intention to cease volunteering

4. Responsibilities of volunteers

To enable you to carry out your volunteer role effectively the church will endeavour to:

- Provide relevant information in this handbook and your role description.
- Provide the training you need to complete the tasks involved in your role.
- Explain the standards we expect and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain these.
- Provide a named group co-ordinator who will be your point of contact, and with whom you can share successes or problems
- Do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us.
- Provide adequate training and feedback in support of our Health and Safety Policy.
- Provide the facilities, equipment and back-up services to carry out the role, including safe working conditions.

- Provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking work approved and authorised by us.
- Provide an environment which is free from unfair treatment.
- Try to resolve fairly any problems or difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us.

We ask you to:

- Help the church to fulfil its aims and objectives, through encouraging and enabling the community activities and use of the church
- Perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability
- Be an active part of the team.
- Take on board the spirit of the church's policies, standards and codes of conduct.
- Endeavour to attend on any dates and times agreed with us and give reasonable notice when this is not possible.
- Develop your knowledge and interest in the church or sphere of service you are volunteering in
- Tell us if you are not comfortable doing a task that has been set for you or if you see any potential problems.

5. Who can become a volunteer?

The church has an equal opportunities policy and volunteering is open to all, regardless of sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or political beliefs. Volunteer placements are made on the suitability of the volunteer to carry out the particular role.

The church has no upper age limit and recognises the valuable contribution made by older volunteers in terms of knowledge and experience. For some tasks, there is a minimum age of 16. Certain activities are also restricted to those aged at least 18 due to Health and Safety and child protection legislation. (This may be at the discretion of the CEM.) When enlisting the help of volunteers, the church will always

take into account the physical fitness of the volunteer, the nature of the role and the particular characteristics of the work.

6. Relationship between the church and a volunteer

The church takes its responsibilities to volunteers seriously; it must also balance its responsibilities to visitors and pilgrims. Our volunteer network is extensive; we have no desire to make processes more complex than they need to be. All volunteers must recognise the need for the PCC (as the ultimately responsible body) to exercise due care and diligence. It is therefore an assumption that if you volunteer for St Laurence's, that you have read the handbook, your appropriate role description and are content to carry out your role.

Each group of volunteers has a co-ordinator who liaises with the CEM. The CEM line manages the volunteer network on a day to day basis on behalf of the Rector, Churchwardens and PCC.

7. How we communicate with you

Each week the parish notices are sent out by email, paper copies are available on the desk; we ask you to read them and make notes of events in the diary. We also aim to publish regular articles in the parish magazine; these will include stories from different volunteering areas across the church. We will also make use of email to communicate important updates such as event invitations and administrative details (such as changes to insurance requirements, retail discount clarification etc). If you don't have access to emails, please ask your volunteer co-ordinator to make this information available to you.

You can also connect with us via social media. Our Facebook page is www.facebook.com/TheParishChurchofStLaurence and you can follow us on Twitter via @StLaurencesVP. We have found that these are excellent

methods for quickly passing on information to our volunteers and supporters, so if you have access to these, do 'like' us or 'follow' us!

If you have a 'good news' story from your volunteer group, we would love to hear from you. Stories with photographs / images are especially welcome!

Please contact us at office@stlaurences.org.uk

8. How you communicate with us

We ask you to direct any query that you may have through your group co-ordinator, they will almost certainly have the answer, if they don't they will contact the CEM.

Please avoid making direct contact with the Rector, Churchwardens or CEM, you will normally be referred back to your group co-ordinator.

9. Induction and training

When you join a volunteer group at St Laurence's, it is the responsibility of your group co-ordinator to provide you with a role description and explain what is expected in your role. Some roles will require training during the course of the year; your co-ordinator will invite you to take part in this. In some roles training is a mandatory requirement.

10. Attendance

Although you do not have contractual arrangements of an employee it would be helpful to facilitate the smooth running of the Trust and its buildings if you could follow the procedures below:

- If you are unable to attend on one of your pre-arranged days, perhaps you are going on holiday, let us know as far in advance as possible, if at all possible at least 3 days in advance.

- If you are unwell or are unable to attend due to a family emergency please call us as early as possible explaining why you are unable to attend and where possible indicating when you will return.
- If you have been unable to attend for some time please keep us informed and make sure you let us know when you are ready to return.
- If you are carrying out the role of welcomer or shop assistant, please remember that it is your responsibility to find a replacement if you are unable to be present for your slot as specified on the rota.

11. Reward and recognition

During the course of the year, individual groups are encouraged to organise social activities to help encourage good working relationships. Each summer we host a volunteer summer party when we can all join together and enjoy a reward for our labours, and at Christmas volunteers are invited to the reception after the Nine Lessons and Carols.

12. Representing the church

St Laurence's is an inclusive church welcoming all, of all faiths and none that said we are a Christian community and ask all volunteers to represent the church in a positive and respectful way.

13. Volunteer expenses

As a rule we do not pay expenses, unless you are making purchases agreed in advance, and within budget, with the CEM.

14. Records, data protection and GDPR

We do keep databases of volunteer contact details. Information regarding our data protection policy can be found on our website.

So that we can attempt to comply with new regulations for GDPR we need to ensure that

- any new volunteers complete a 'Volunteer Consent Form' (obtainable from the volunteer lead). When completed it should be sent to the Parish Office for secure storage.
- any lists of volunteers or rotas which contain personal data are held on the SLL OneDrive and not on any home computers. Any printed lists which contain personal data apart from names should not be displayed publicly.
- when emailing groups of volunteers, the email addresses are put in the BCC (blind carbon copy) line and not in the To or CC line.

15. Insurance

Public liability insurance to all volunteers when acting under the direction of their group leader/CEM/Rector is provided by Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

16. Safeguarding

The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.

The Church of England has set out a National Policy on the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy has been informed by the Joint Safeguarding Statement between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, with whom we work jointly on many aspects of safeguarding policy on a covenant basis. The Church of England has laid out a requirement for all Parishes to adopt

the Policy 'Promoting a Safer Church' as part of local policy. This Code of Practice is taken from this national and local Policy.

For full details of our safeguarding policy please see the PCC policies section of our website.

If your role specifically involves working with young people or vulnerable adults, the PCC may require you to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service application. If this is a requirement of your role, it will be noted on your Volunteer Role Description.

Some roles will require either or both DBS and training with regard to the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults. Your role description will say whether this is applicable to you.

As an inclusive church, we are committed to supporting vulnerable adults who wish to volunteer. To help support and protect vulnerable adults your group co-ordinator will need to review specific ways in which individual needs can be met.

17. Security

Security of church buildings, visitors and the site is the responsibility of us all. You should remain vigilant at all times and ensure you know what to do and who to inform if you have a concern or see a problem.

In an emergency, you must not hesitate to summon the support of the relevant emergency service by dialling '999' either by the fixed-line telephone in the shop or your own mobile phone.

Please also be advised that certain areas in the church are covered by CCTV at all times; full details of our CCTV policy can be found on our website.

18. Health and safety

To ensure good health and safety the church needs the full co-operation of all volunteers and you are expected to give all possible assistance aimed at its successful implementation and take reasonable care for your own safety and that of others.

Every volunteer must:

- Comply with any safety instructions and directions issued by the church
- Take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of themselves and others by observing the Health and Safety rules that apply to them.
- Co-operate with the church to ensure that the aims of the Health and Safety Policy are achieved and any duty or requirement imposed on the church by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions is complied with.
- Report or co-operate with the investigation of accidents or incidents that have or may lead to injury
- Use equipment or protective clothing in accordance with the level of training received
- Report any potential risk or hazard or malfunction of equipment to the person responsible

Each group of volunteers is required to have an annual Health and Safety briefing. If you are unsure of any rules regarding Health and Safety please ask. A full copy of the Health and Safety Policy can be found in church or on our website.

19. Problem Solving Procedure

The church hopes that you will find your voluntary work both enjoyable and satisfying. Problems are quite rare and we hope that you will not need to refer to these guidelines. However, it is important that you know what to do if you experience a problem and what would happen if there was a problem with your work.

If you have a problem, in the first instance you should contact your group co-ordinator, who will deal with day-to-day problems you have as part of your support and supervision. If you have any problems, or if there is anything you are worried about, make sure that you talk to them about it. They will in turn liaise with the CEM to bring about a resolution of any issues. The CEM meets on a weekly basis with the Rector and Churchwardens and any issues will be discussed here.

Please remember that St Laurence's is not an average parish church, on occasion there are conflicting demands, sometimes it can be difficult to understand the whole picture; regular communication between staff and group co-ordinators usually avoids any conflict. Where issues do arise, we ask you for forbearance and patience as we seek resolution.

20. Equal Opportunities

As an inclusive church, we are committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all volunteers and to ensuring within the framework of the law that the Trust is free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender (including gender reassignment), marital status, disability, age, sexual orientation and religious or philosophical beliefs.

We are committed to ensuring that all our volunteers are protected from unlawful discrimination. Whilst you are volunteering with us you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that is not discriminatory and we will take all possible steps to ensure an equal opportunity culture is maintained.

We wish to develop a working environment that will enable disabled persons with appropriate skills to seek and maintain voluntary opportunities with us. If you have any additional support needs with your role please discuss this in confidence with the appropriate person and we will do our best to help where possible.

21. Bullying and harassment

Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated in the working environment, as it can have a devastating effect on the health, confidence, morale and performance of those whom it affects. It may also have a damaging effect on other volunteers who are not themselves the object of unwanted behaviour but who are witness to it or have knowledge of the behaviour. All volunteers are entitled to a working environment which respects their personal dignity and which is free from such objectionable conduct. Harassment and bullying by volunteers will be treated as serious incidents under the volunteer Problem Solving Procedure.

22. When you decide you no longer wish to volunteer

You are free to leave at any time; however, it is very helpful to the church if you could give us as much notice as possible of your intention to leave. This will enable us to recruit new volunteers.

When you decide it is time to move on please inform your group coordinator. They may ask you about your reasons for leaving, which you do not have to tell us, if you do not wish to. The reason for asking this question is to find out if there are any things we may need to change in consequence of your volunteering experience, to make improvements for the future and ensure that everyone has a good experience.

23. Useful contacts

Please see the volunteering section of the website for the up to date contact details.

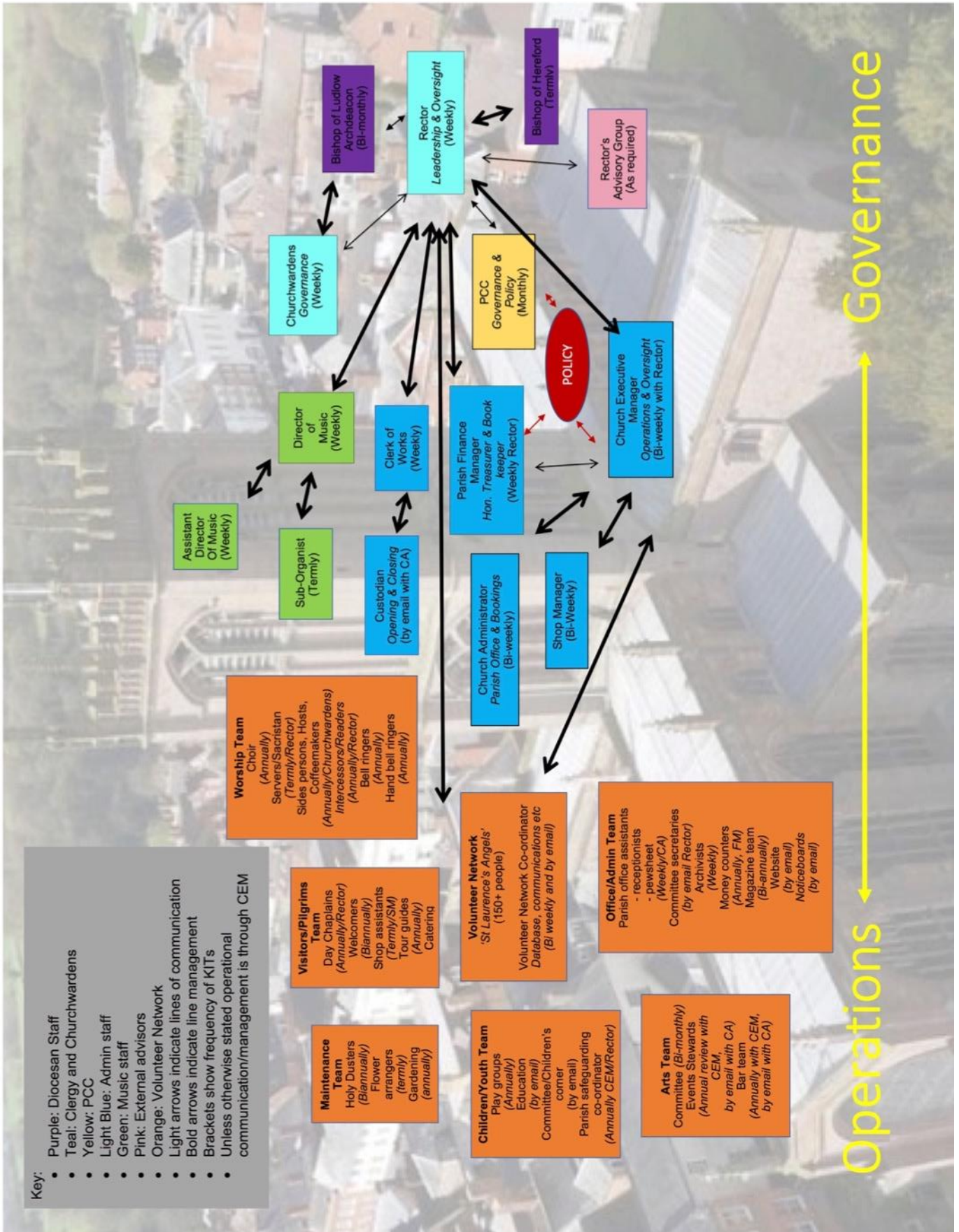
24. List of policies

Please see our website for a full list of PCC policies.

25. Emergency procedures

Details of what to do in an emergency can be found at key points in the building, these are highly visible yellow laminated sheets, please regularly familiarise yourself with these, as they are often updated.

St Laurence's Organogram



26. Volunteer Charter

Volunteers are an important and valued part of the Parish Church of St Laurence. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel a full part of our team.

This charter tells you what you can expect from us, and what we can hope for from you.

We the Parish Church of St Laurence, will do our best:

- to introduce you to how the organisation works, your group co-ordinator, your role description and to provide any training you may need.
- to encourage regular meetings with your group co-ordinator so that you can tell us if you are happy with how your tasks are organised and obtain feedback.
- to respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them
- to consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes
- to insure you against injury you suffer or cause due to negligence
- to provide a safe workplace
- to apply our equal opportunities policy
- to provide access to our complaints procedure if there is any problem

As a volunteer at the Parish Church of St Laurence, I shall:

- carry out my volunteering duties to the best of my ability;
- endeavour to find a replacement for my duties when I am not able to fulfil my normal commitment;
- and follow The Parish Church of St Laurence's policies and procedures, including health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality as outlined in the Volunteer Guidebook.

This agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.