


# CHAPLAINS' HANDBOOK



The **Methodist Church**  
Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District

 SHROPSHIRE AND MARCHES  
METHODIST CIRCUIT

 THE DIOCESE OF HEREFORD



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## FOREWORD

*When the door slams shut  
and I turn the key  
on the inside;  
when I permit no window of hope,  
no glimmer of grace,  
nor comfort of companionship;  
then, in your tenderness,  
You gift me with one  
whose kindness turns the key,  
whose courage cracks  
the combined codes of pain  
and fearfulness;  
one who eases the door ajar  
to welcome first shafts of sunlight  
and promise of freedom.*

This poem is by my friend and colleague in ministry, Liz Smith. She describes wonderfully how fear and pain can lead us into internal “lock-down”. In this state we feel isolated even when we are in company and hope is hard to come by.

To those in “lock-down” God seeks to offer the gift of one “whose kindness turns the key”. Sometimes being such a one is just about being in the right time at the right place. But often we are invited to be “the one” through vocation to a particular ministry. Within the Body of Christ this is often pastoral ministry. In the wider community, the Body of Christ seeks to offer God’s gift through the ministry of chaplaincy.

You may spend hundreds of hours being present in rural communities between those rare opportunities “to welcome the first shafts of sunlight” into a personal world of fear and pain. None of those hours are wasted - it is all grist to God’s mill. Yet it is in those fleeting moments when “the promise of freedom” is sensed that we can appreciate what Chaplaincy can be at its fullest and deepest.

If a person trusts you enough to give you the key to their life then, like Moses, you stand on holy ground and need take off your sandals. There is an absolute need for kindness, for courage and for gentleness, as the door is “eased ajar”: rather than flung open.

This is an awesome responsibility and one that you are exercising on behalf of the Church. As a Borderland’s Rural Chaplain you will often be working alone but you should never be working in isolation. This handbook, through its practicalities, describes the framework provided to help you work safely and sustainably. It is vitally important that you work within its guidelines.

At worst, it aims to prevent harm to you or to anyone else. At best, it aims to uphold you in a ministry through which you can bring hope and promise to the lives of some of God’s hard-pressed sons and daughters in our rural communities. May you be blessed and be a blessing.

***Reverend Rachel Parkinson, Chair of the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Methodist District.***

## **What is an Agricultural Chaplain?**

Agricultural Chaplains are people with a pastoral heart and a commitment to the land-based sector. Their motivation arises from their Christian faith, but they are expected to exercise that faith with discretion and integrity. There may be times when it is appropriate to talk about faith or to pray with someone, but the essential requirements of a chaplain are attentive listening and pastoral sensitivity. All chaplains need to respect confidentiality.

Chaplains are also expected to respect the plurality of people's religious views, relationships and politics and not to impose their own opinions. Rural people and communities are part of an inclusive society and this we affirm. Our role is not to give advice but to offer support. It is important that we understand and link with the wider network of agencies and organisations to which referrals can be made if the situation warrants.

We expect chaplains to be people of prayer, to be rooted in a worshipping Christian community and to be prepared to hold themselves accountable to God, to one another, and to the Borderlands Management Group. Since chaplains are commissioned by the church to exercise their ministry they should conform to the standards and teachings of the church, fulfil any legal requirements of their post and commit to provide relevant information and data when requested.

The role is as varied as the people who undertake it. The Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy (BRC) team collectively attend agricultural markets, shows and events; engage in pastoral casework, advocacy, preaching and teaching; work with allied organisations in the rural community; develop theological resources and provide bespoke chaplaincies to named rural and farming organisations.

## **Chaplains' selection, training and commissioning**

There is a process by which individual candidates are able to explore whether God is calling them to agricultural chaplaincy. This will vary depending on the individual but includes attendance at training events, taking up references and working alongside existing team members.

A probationary period is normally required, which allows both the team and the candidate to assess the effectiveness of the relationship, identify areas of concern and/or requirements for training. If the team and the individual are both in agreement the chaplain will be recommended to be commissioned.

Before commissioning, all chaplains must fulfil certain legal requirements including:

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Checks
- Safeguarding Training

These will be organised via the candidate's sponsoring denomination. See also page 14 of this handbook.

Commissioning takes place on behalf of both sponsoring partners, typically within an ecumenical service. Chaplain's reviews (Appendix D) are opportunities that allow the chaplain time to reflect on their own future commitments etc., after which they may decide to extend the ministry for a further period. Most chaplains are unpaid volunteers and the constraints on an individual chaplain's time and capacity are taken seriously.

## **Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy – Our personal commitment**

BRC has four objectives:

1. To serve the farming and land-based industries, providing pastoral care to farming families in conjunction with Parish and Circuit Ministers.
2. To act as advocates for the farming and land-based community, especially in issues which affect human health and well-being.
3. To inform the church of wider rural concerns, providing briefings and insights for church leaders and working to raise awareness of pastoral issues.
4. To ensure that the church's response to rural issues is theologically informed, assisting in this process by providing material for reflection, worship and prayer.

Chaplains within Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy are expected to subscribe to shared values and undertake a personal commitment to:

**Team working** BRC operates as a team, and although all chaplains are expected to be self-motivated they should commit to the team ethos, attend team meetings and offer prayerful support to all team members. Team working ensures that individual chaplains do not become overloaded and that adequate pastoral cover is available. It also enables the team to respond to situations by allocating chaplains with the most appropriate skills and experience to individual cases.

**Professional development** No individual is expected to have all the skills and knowledge required to meet BRC's objectives, and no one is expected to cope on their own. The Management Group (see page 10) and the Chaplaincy Team are jointly responsible for ensuring that the demands on the team are shared effectively. The Management Group, working with the team, helps to identify team



strengths and weaknesses. Individual chaplains may contribute, or be asked to develop, specialist skills in support of the greater good. An annual review process is in place to support this (Appendix D) and it is a requirement that chaplains undertake this review.

All chaplains are encouraged to attend training events. Normally these will have been identified by the Management Group and Chaplaincy Team, but individuals can also apply for resources to attend bespoke events. Training is typically undertaken as a team and this has included First Aid, awareness of farm biosecurity, updating on policy issues, training in attentive listening and development of pastoral skills, and the role of social media. Specialist support is available from the Communications and Training Officers from both the Diocese and District.

**Pastoral confidentiality** Chaplains are required to respect pastoral confidentiality at all times. However, within BRC the limits of confidentiality extend to all licensed chaplains so that burdens can be shared within the team and the insights and connections provided by other chaplains can be used to support individual cases.

**Collaborative working** BRC takes external networking seriously, building trust and connections with a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations with whom it operates collaboratively. These organisational networks perform a dual role: they are able to signpost people to the Chaplaincy Team and, where appropriate, they may be approached to offer support to individuals with whom the chaplains are in pastoral contact.

## Governance of BRC

BRC has a threefold governance structure:

- The **BRC Strategic Board**. The Board comprises representatives of the sponsoring partners (the Diocese of Hereford, and Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton Methodist District). The Board is responsible for providing strategic direction, ensuring that resources are in place to support the chaplaincy and maintaining effective communication with the sponsoring partners.
- The **BRC Management Group**. The Management Group is responsible for developing the work programme and annual budget for Board approval. The Management Group provide focused support for the Chaplaincy Team
- The **BRC Chaplaincy Team**. The team comprises all licensed chaplains. Team meetings (termed “mucky boots” meetings) are held regularly to provide collective support, identify training requirements and share resources.

## Communications

The vital role of communications in agricultural chaplaincy cannot be overstated. BRC's communications priorities are:

- Maximising connections within the team to facilitate effective team working.
- Raising the profile of BRC within the land-based sector and partner organisations in ways that build trust and facilitate more effective engagement.

Technology is providing new communication tools with which to engage both internally and externally and BRC is eager to ensure that all chaplains, given appropriate training and support, can maximise engagement with farming communities and build and maintain pastoral and partner relationships. Raising awareness of BRC will rely heavily on the use of online and Social Media communications in future.

Recent developments have seen BRC relaunch its website, **borderchaplain.org**, launch a Twitter account, BorderChaplains **@Rurchap1**, and experiment with platforms such as YouTube and SLACK. The potential for using WhatsApp, Instagram (/Snapchat) and Hootsuite are being considered. At the very least, the website, Twitter account and a planned Facebook page will become intrinsic to the chaplaincy's daily interactions. All chaplains will be encouraged to create engaging and informative content.

## General Data Protection Regulations

All chaplains must comply with the Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). This applies to all personal and sensitive personal data whether:

- Processed on computers, or
- Stored in manual (paper based) filing systems

GDPR encompasses both personal and sensitive data. Personal data are generally non-sensitive, such as name and address, personal email addresses, date of birth, medical information (e.g. GP's contact details), banking details, National Insurance Number, employment and student applications, employment and education history, and minutes of meetings, appraisals, reports. Sensitive personal data is also included because, for example, it could be used in a discriminatory way. This includes racial or ethnic origin, gender, political opinions, religious beliefs, information about physical or mental health, sexual orientation, Trade Union membership, criminal records and medical history.

Sensitive personal data may only be gathered in the first place if:

- The person gives consent and/or
- The data are required under employment law and/or
- The data are a matter of legal rights (e.g. where there is a requirement to disclose information to the police in relation to a criminal investigation)

As chaplains you will be often have data about someone that fit within these categories. The lawful basis for having the data is that this is necessary for the casework we have been asked to undertake. However, at all times the information should be kept securely and not shared without permission. It should not be retained after the case has been closed (files should be deleted and/or paper copies shredded).

You are also responsible for the security of any personal data you hold, for example:

- If digital – is it within password or pincode protected computers which are also firewall protected, and within protected locations on the computer such as a password protected file?
- If hard copy – is it kept within locked filing cabinets?

Note that photographs, audio and video material may also constitute personal data, even if the individuals are not identified within the photograph.

## **Safeguarding**

BRC chaplains work with vulnerable people and all commissioned chaplains should be DBS checked and have attended safeguarding training organised through their participating church denominations. Each denomination has their own appointed safeguarding officers who can be contacted by Chaplains if required.

Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Methodist District, Safeguarding Officer:

Margaret Reynolds

Safeguarding helpline: 07800 719639

e-mail: [safeguarding@wsmethodist.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@wsmethodist.org.uk)

Hereford Diocese, Safeguarding Adviser:

Mandy McPhee

Tel: 01746 785168 or 07875 757391

e-mail: [m.mcphee@hereford.anglican.org](mailto:m.mcphee@hereford.anglican.org)

## Insurance

Commissioned chaplains are insured under the BRC insurance policy issued by Methodist Insurance PLC, provided they operate within the parameters set by the policy. NB. **This does not extend to giving advice**, our role is to accompany and signpost, we do not have professional indemnity insurance.

If you are organising events under the auspices of BRC please keep details of the location and the numbers attending as this will be used to inform next year's policy. The Employers Liability Insurance Policy which applies to BRC chaplains is contained in Appendix C.

Please address any insurance queries to the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Methodist District Office (address on page 16).

## **Claiming expenses**

The finances of BRC are managed by the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Methodist District and any queries concerning expenses can be addressed to:

**The District Office,**  
Beckminster Methodist Church,  
Birches Barn Road,  
Wolverhampton WV3 7BQ

email: [admin@wsmethodist.org.uk](mailto:admin@wsmethodist.org.uk)

Tel: 01902 658383

The District Treasurer is Chris Reed, who sits on the BRC Strategic Board, and the office staff are Leigh Mayhew (Administrator) and Janet Fenney (Admin Assistant).

Expenses incurred by chaplains will be reimbursed, monthly or quarterly, on submission to the District Office of an expenses claim form. These forms are supplied by the District Office in both Excel and PDF formats and can be saved on a chaplain's computer. Claims may be submitted electronically or by post.

For travel expenses:

- A log should be kept of the details of each journey, and this must be made available for inspection if requested. Mileage is reimbursed at the rate of 45p per mile. An additional 5p per mile is claimable if a lift is being given to another Chaplain who would otherwise have lodged a claim independently.
- Claims for public transport will be paid on receipt of the relevant tickets. Please ensure that the most cost-effective tickets are purchased.

Phone costs relating to chaplaincy work are claimable, supported by relevant documentary evidence. Other expenses may be claimable, e.g. subsistence, but should be agreed and authorised by the Team Leader before submission. Payments will normally be by direct transfer into the chaplain's bank account using Faster Payments.



## **Appendix A. Volunteer Policy**

This policy provides the broad principles for those who are commissioned as unpaid Agricultural Chaplains within Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy. It recognises that volunteer chaplains offer time freely, but with a presumption of mutual support and responsibilities.

### **Supervision**

All volunteers have a nominated team leader, David Gwatkin, to offer guidance and advice. All volunteers may also approach any member of the Management Group with concerns or suggestions. The Management Group (in addition to the Team Leader) consists of:

- Jon Chesworth (Chair)
- Paul Trenberth
- Deborah Wills
- Nick Read

The Rev'd Brian Chave has been designated as the chaplain to all members of the Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy and can also be approached for direction and advice.

Tel: (Hereford Diocesan Office) 01432 373324

e-mail: [b.chave@hereford.anglican.org](mailto:b.chave@hereford.anglican.org)

### **Recruitment, selection and training**

Volunteer recruitment, selection and training is dealt with on page 7 of this handbook.

### **Continuing professional development**

Provisions for CPD are dealt with in the section on Annual Review (Appendix D) within this handbook.

### **Volunteer expenses**

Provisions for claiming expenses are dealt with on page 16 of this handbook.

**Insurance**

The organisations liability insurance policies (see page 20) include the activities of its paid and voluntary Chaplains. NB. it is a requirement of insurance that all Chaplains have been DBS checked and have attended safeguarding training, and that they comply with any directions issued by the Board or Management Group.

**Confidentiality**

The commitment expected from each volunteer Chaplain, including confidentiality, are specified in page 8 of this handbook.

**Settling differences**

BRC aims to treat all of its chaplains fairly, objectively and consistently, and also to ensure that concerns are heard, noted and acted upon. Any initial concerns or requests should be directed to the Team Leader, David Gwatkin. In the event of a problem all relevant facts will be collected as quickly as possible. If an informal resolution proves impossible the Chaplain has the right to appeal to the Board. If a grievance concerns the Team Leader then the volunteer should raise their concerns with another member of the Management Group.

## **B. Visiting Health and Safety Policy**

Chaplains will be visiting people who may need help because they are ill or under stress. They may be unable to maintain high safety standards in their homes or farms and this may affect both them and you.

- Be aware that many accidents occur in the home and that sensible measures can prevent injury or death.
- If you come across situations which seem unsafe talk to the person being visited and, with their permission, raise your concern with the relevant authorities.

### **Personal safety**

- It is your responsibility not to put yourself at risk, if you are unsure whether something is safe do not do it.
- It is good practice to notify a third party of the locations and timings of any visits that are being undertaken.
- Although it is not failsafe, given the paucity of effective phone cover in parts of the Borders, please ensure that you have a mobile phone with you at all times.

## Appendix C. Employers Liability Policy Certificate



### Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969

#### CERTIFICATE OF EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY INSURANCE (a)

(Where required by regulation 5 of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (the Regulations), one or more copies of this certificate must be displayed at each place of

business at which the policyholder employs persons covered by the policy)

Policy Number: 21/MCS/0306093

Name of policyholder: The Committee for the time being of Borderlands  
Rural Chaplaincy

Date of commencement of insurance policy: 9 November 2017

Date of expiry of insurance policy: 8 November 2018

We hereby certify that subject to paragraph 2:-

1. the policy to which this certificate relates satisfies the requirements of the relevant law applicable in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Island of Jersey, the Island of Guernsey and the Island of Alderney (b);  
and
2. (a) the minimum amount of cover provided by this policy is no less than £5 million (c)

Signed on behalf of Methodist Insurance Company plc (Authorised Insurer)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Angell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a diagonal line that serves as a signature separator.

Michael Angell  
General Manager

## Notes

- a. Where the employer is a company to which regulation 3(2) of the Regulations applies, the certificate shall state in a prominent place, either that the policy covers the holding company and all its subsidiaries, or that the policy covers the holding company and all its subsidiaries except any specifically excluded by name, or that the policy covers the holding company and only the named subsidiaries.
- b. Specify applicable law as provided for in regulation 4(6) of the Regulations.
- c. See regulation 3(1) of the Regulations and delete whichever of paragraphs 2(a) or 2(b) does not apply. Where 2(b) is applicable, specify the amount of cover provided by the relevant policy.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO POLICYHOLDERS

Under the terms of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 the requirement to display a certificate will be satisfied if it is made available in electronic form and each relevant employee to whom it relates has reasonable access to it in that form.

Methodist Insurance PLC (MIC) Reg. No. 6369. Registered in England at Beaufort House, Brunswick Road, Gloucester, GL1 1JZ. MIC is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

## **Appendix D. Chaplain's Review**

BRC takes seriously the requirements and capabilities of its chaplains and the review process is intended to support a chaplain's continuing professional development. Please note that the review is not a performance appraisal; it is about helping the whole Chaplaincy to work at its most efficient and ensure that all involved feel valued in their ministry.

The review will be conducted by a member of the Board or Management Group appointed for the purpose. As far as is practicable, chaplains should have a review at the end of any probationary period and regularly thereafter. It consists of a face to face interview and an agreed summary of issues and actions.

The purpose of the Review is to ensure that both the chaplain and the Management Group understand aspirations, training and personal development needs, and that these are recorded and acted upon before the next review date. Therefore, completed reviews are submitted to the Management Group to inform future training requirements and budget discussions. Within this context, any discussions that take place between individual chaplains and the Chaplaincy Team Leader (David Gwatkin) which concern the operational effectiveness of BRC can also inform the review process.

The attached Pro forma is designed to initiate the conversations required. Chaplains and those undertaking the review are at liberty to expand as appropriate. If previous reviews have been conducted the answer to these questions should also record what action occurred as a result of any previous review.

## Appendix E. BRC ANNUAL REVIEW PRO FORMA

	Name
	Primary chaplaincy role
	Geographical area covered
	Date you became a chaplain
	Is the Review probationary or annual?

Personal satisfaction – please fill in the table

	Unhappy	Disappointed	Acceptable	Developing	Fulfilled	Exceeds
Confidence in your role						
Support and training offered						
Knowledge of BRC activities						
Support from other chaplains						
Knowledge of wider networks						
Other (please specify)						



**Degree of supervision**

Would you like more supervisory assistance?    Yes        No  
If yes – please specify

**Skills development**

Have you identified areas where you would like to develop your skills as a Chaplain?  
Yes        No  
If yes – please specify

**Relevant training undertaken**

Please specify any training or development that you have undertaken in the last 12 months?  
(NB. this includes training external to that provided by BRC and should address whether action was taken following a previous review)

**Future training needs**

Have you identified any training that you would like?

**Capacity**

How many hours per week on average are you giving to Borderlands?

Is this amount of time that you expected?

Yes        No  
If no - please elaborate

### **Continuing role**

Would you like to continue as a BRC chaplain for the following year?

Yes            No

If no – please elaborate

In circumstances in which a chaplain has indicated a desire to stop operating with BRC in the future, the review process may also explore how BRC can best help individuals so that there is an effective exit strategy that continues to support them.

### **Actions following the review**

The Reviewer will produce a summary confirming what training and development has been agreed, and any other points that need to be recorded. This should be confirmed, dated and signed by both parties and will be used by the Management Group to determine the future training and delivery programme for both the individual and the Chaplaincy Team.

### **Useful contact numbers:**

Brian Chave  
Jon Chesworth  
Nick Read  
David Gwatkin  
Paul Trenberth  
Deborah Wills

## NOTES

