

If there are only enough candidates to fill the vacancies, do we really need to vote?

Yes. The vote should be an expression of the prayerful will of the church, affirming elected candidates in their role. It also provides a safety check for both church and nominees.

What if I am asked to consider being a deacon?

Pray! Think it over. Talk to those close to you. Talk to the pastors, or existing deacons, or ex-deacons about what is involved. Make a decision on whether you are ready and willing to let your name be put forward. Remember that the appointment process is a means of testing things out with the church, not validation or rejection of you as a person!

What happens when deacons are appointed?

They begin their service straightaway and are welcomed and prayed for at the first convenient communion service. New deacons are taken through an induction and information session with the Pastor and Church Secretary.

Why should I get involved in this process?

As Baptists, we believe that the church meeting is the place where together we seek and discern God's will for all key church decisions. It is important, therefore, for members to be involved in appointing deacons by thinking and praying about it and by participating in the process.

Serving as a Deacon



Some questions and answers
on the role of deacons and
how they are appointed

Who are the deacons?

A group of men and women appointed by the church meeting to serve* with the Pastors as a leadership team. Whilst the team cannot represent exactly, it is hoped that it will reflect the mix of gender, age and background within our fellowship.

(* *Deacon means servant* - see Acts 6:1-4, 1 Timothy 3:8-13.)

What do they do?

Working with and supporting the Pastors, the task of the diaconate is to offer:

- *spiritual leadership* - praying through and discussing key issues in the life of the church and empowering church members to own and develop the ministry and mission of our fellowship.
- *pastoral concern* - contributing to the wider pastoral network of care, welcoming people at the door on a Sunday and serving people at Communion.
- *practical oversight* - each deacon taking responsibility for some aspects of the church's ministry and working with others to develop that part of our fellowship.

Legally, deacons are Managing Trustees of the church and work to ensure the church carries out its work in line with our Trust Deed and the UK charity laws. (There are certain legal issues, e.g. undischarged bankruptcy and conviction for dishonesty, that disqualify a person from being a Trustee.)

When do they meet?

Once a month for a business meeting and for a prayer meeting. Occasionally there are extra meetings when a particular issue needs to be discussed more fully and each year there is an Awayday for more informed prayer and reflection.

How are they appointed?

Every year at the AGM in May, some deacons may complete their term of service, creating spaces on the diaconate. These need to be filled by individuals nominated prior to that meeting.

Who can be nominated?

Anyone who is a full church member is available to serve and willing to make a contribution to the leadership team.

Who can nominate?

Any church member. If you think of someone suitable, pray about it and check it out with a few others and then ask the person if they are willing to consider nomination. If they agree, find someone to second and then write the nomination on the list in the foyer. This is available for two full weeks (3 Sundays) before the AGM and closed on the Sunday 16 days prior to the church meeting.

How long do they serve?

Deacons are appointed for a three-year term and are eligible to serve a second three-year term if they are willing, nominated and appointed. After that period they need to stand down for a period of at least one year before being nominated for further service.

How does the appointment work?

A secret ballot is taken at the AGM. The vacancies will be filled by those who receive the most votes above the 50% minimum requirement. A postal ballot is available for those who are unable to be present at the meeting.