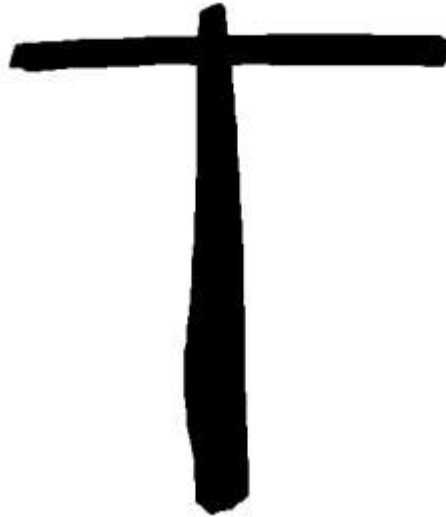


The Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis



Chapter Handbook

(June 2014)

Underlined words in blue denote clickable hyperlinks (within the document), e.g. from the index to each section and from each section back to the index.

This document was originally prepared by a Governance Working Group (Nancy Adams, Martin Gillham, Chris Petrie and John Wiltshire) for the European Provincial Chapter of TSSF between March 2012 and March 2014.

It is for Chapter to approve amendments and updates.

Guidelines for the Chapter Handbook

The intention is that the Chapter Handbook will be used alongside the **Constitution, Statutes** and **Principles** of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis (TSSF) to provide guidance to Members of Provincial Chapter, who under Charity Law are also Trustees of the European Province of the Order. Area Teams may also use this Handbook as a guide and reference.

The Statutes set out the Mission of the Order and the structures and processes which enable this Mission to be pursued by members of the Order (i.e. structures at the Local, Area and Provincial levels; membership and responsibilities of Chapter; formation; elections and appointment of office holders; complaints and appeals).

The Handbook seeks to complement the Statutes (particularly Sections 3, 5, 6 and 7) by ensuring that members of Chapter, as Trustees, understand the principles of good governance as set out in the Charity Commission's *Good Governance: A Code for the Voluntary and Community Sector*.

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I. MISSION and OBJECTIVES

MISSION (as set out in the Statutes)

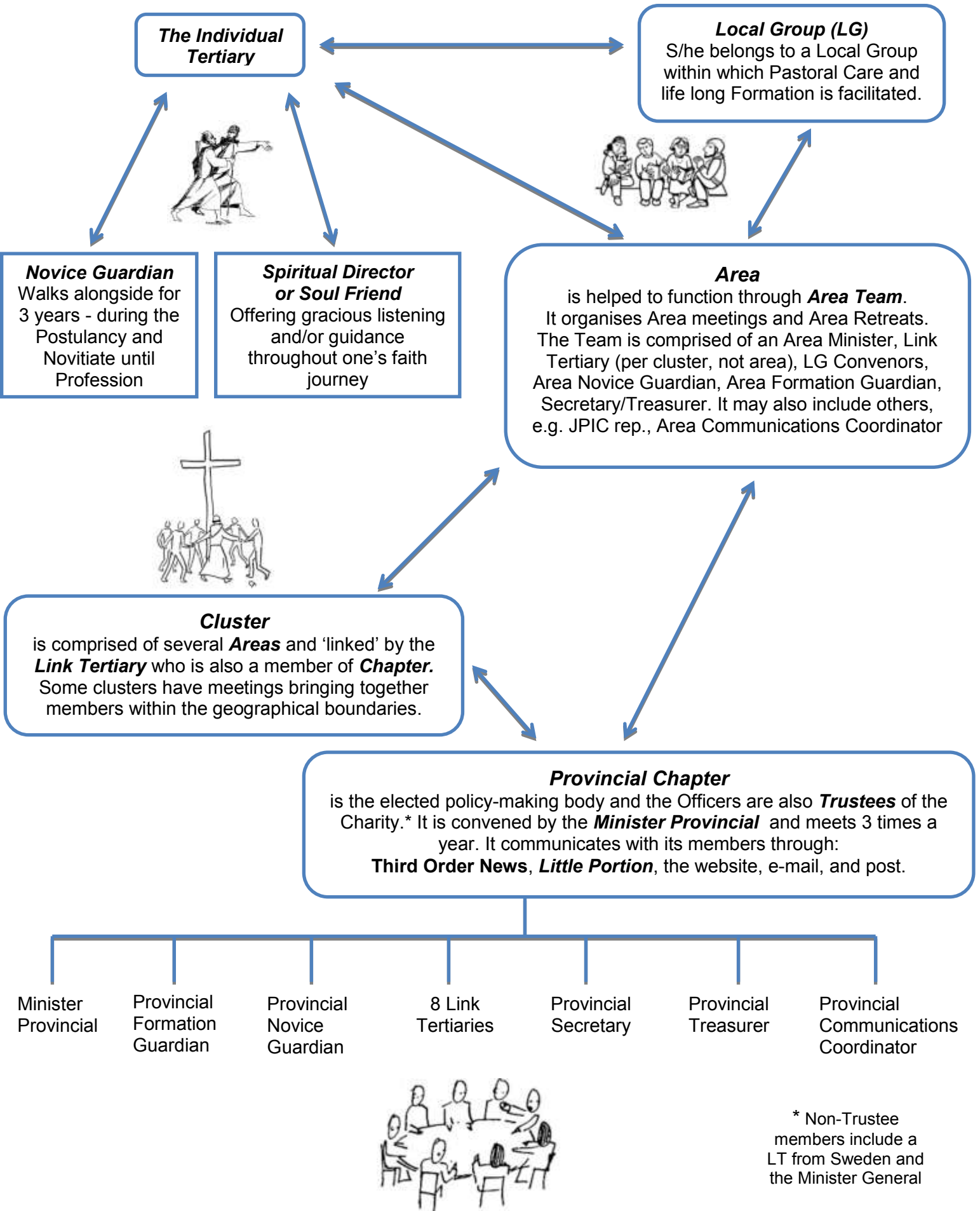
The mission of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis is to build a community of those who accept Christ as their Lord and Master, are dedicated to him in body and spirit, with a desire to fulfil the three aims of the Order: to make our Lord known and loved everywhere, to spread a spirit of love and harmony, and to live simply. The Third Order aims to attract, nurture and empower Christian men and women, loyal members of their own Churches, who wish to follow Christ in the distinctive way of Francis and Clare.

(Chapter 1998, reaffirmed in 2012)

OBJECTIVES (as set out in the Chapter Review of 1998 and reaffirmed by Chapter in 2012)

1. To ensure a continuing and concerted process for the personal nurture and development of Tertiaries throughout their Franciscan journey.
2. To continue to build community, providing Tertiaries with imaginative and practical networking/communications opportunities.
3. To increase Tertiaries' knowledge and understanding of Franciscan spirituality and history, particularly regarding the lives of Francis and Clare.
4. To achieve a confident, self-standing Local Leadership, within a less dependent culture generally in TSSF as a whole.
5. To engage actively with Christ's mission, having regard for all of creation and the needs of the marginalised.
6. To attract new, younger members in appropriate ways, including action to raise the awareness of TSSF in Church communities.
7. Ecumenism
8. To improve the funding of the Province, allowing greater freedom for new initiatives, and managing TSSF's finances prudently and effectively.

II. The Third Order – How it Functions



III. Provincial Chapter

(supplementing Section 3 of the Statutes)

i. Purpose of the Provincial Offices and Bishop Protector

(full role descriptions can be found in Appendix i)

See Statute 3.1

MINISTER PROVINCIAL (MP)

Overview

(Extracted from Provincial Review, consultation Document, October 1998)

In an emerging and expanding organisation a particular question arises about the roles and responsibilities of Provincial Office bearers. In a religious organisation, and particularly in a Religious Order, history and theology need to be brought to bear.

The MP has a series of tasks to perform, some of these are to do with the admission and withdrawal of the professed, some are representative and are undertaken on behalf of all those in the Order, while others are administrative. The over-arching concept is that of *episcopate* or pastoral oversight and of a person who both 'holds' the vision for the moment and who recreates a renewed vision by shared debate.

The particular task of any senior person is to re-focus an organisation, to unite the members around an agreed set of tasks and to guide them forward. In the case of TSSF many responsibilities are shared ones. Particularly, the MP has a duty in a 'shared responsibility' way with Provincial office bearers, whilst retaining the appropriate authority of the role.

Purpose of the Office

As a member of the Chapter and a Trustee of the Order to be responsible for leading the European Province of the Order in following the way of Saint Francis. *(Constitution 3.3.a)*

PROVINCIAL FORMATION GUARDIAN (PFG)

Purpose of the Office

As a member of the Provincial Chapter and Trustee of the Order, to further the on-going nurture and growth of all Tertiaries in the Province, novices and professed, towards a greater closeness to the tradition, documents, teaching and spirituality of the Franciscan way; to promote support for those in leadership roles in the Order; and to foster life-long learning in the Order; to deputise for the Minister Provincial when required.

PROVINCIAL NOVICE GUARDIAN (PNG)

Purpose of the Office

As a member of the Provincial Chapter and Trustee of the Order, to further the ongoing nurture and growth of all Postulants and Novice Tertiaries in the Province, towards a greater closeness to the tradition, documents, teaching and spirituality of the Franciscan Way; to foster a foundation for life-long learning in the Order.

LINK TERTIARY (LT)

Purpose of the Office

As a member of the Chapter and a Trustee of the Order, to provide a personal link between Tertiaries in an agreed cluster of Areas and the Provincial Chapter.

PROVINCIAL SECRETARY (PS)

Purpose of the Office

To be the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis European Province point of contact with the Charity Commission in respect of Charity Number 1064356. As a member of Provincial Chapter and a Trustee of the Order, to obtain or provide legal and professional advice to the European Province at all levels if and when required; to be the lead officer for Data Protection issues; to arrange meetings and minutes of Provincial Chapter; to act as "Returning Officer" for elections or delegate this task.

PROVINCIAL TREASURER (PT)

Purpose of the Office

As a member of the Chapter and a Trustee of the Province to be responsible for the Finances of the European Province and for any other funds set up by the Chapter on behalf of the Province; and to account for these yearly to the membership in the form required by Charity Law.

PROVINCIAL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR (PCC)

Purpose of the Office

As a member of Chapter and a Trustee of the Order, the Provincial Communications Coordinator is responsible, on behalf of Provincial Chapter, for overseeing and promoting effective communications within the European Province. The principal function of this role is to work closely with members of the TSSF Communications Team, to represent the Team at Chapter and, with the Team, to maintain the supply, quality, relevance and cost-effectiveness of all TSSF print and electronic communications.

PROVINCIAL MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (PMS)

Purpose of the Office

To keep the core records of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1999, and within the policy advised by the Provincial Secretary.

BISHOP PROTECTOR of the European Province of TSSF (BP)

Purpose of the Office

To represent the Order in the wider councils of the Church; to guard the nature and Rule of the Third Order within the Society of Saint Francis and the Anglican Communion; to support and encourage the development of its vision according to the Rule of the Order; the Minister Provincial is to keep the Bishop Protector informed of the life of the province. To admit each new Minister Provincial and conduct a Blessing of Ministry; to offer advice and pastoral care to the Minister Provincial and the members of Provincial Chapter; and to any professed Tertiary when necessary and upon reasonable request to the Minister Provincial.

ii. Responsibilities of Trustees (See also Statute 3.2)

Charity trustees are the people who serve on the governing body of a charity. They may be known as trustees, directors, board members, governors or committee members. The principles and main duties are the same in all cases.

Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it has been set up.

Why register as a charitable trust?

- In return for taking on the responsibilities applicable to a charitable trust, an unincorporated charitable trust such as TSSF, may claim Charity tax relief on the Trust's income and financial assets, providing the trustees fulfil the 'management condition' of being 'fit and proper persons': that means the trustee has signed a declaration which complies with the guidelines laid down by HMRC. This tax relief translates to the ability to use the trust funds in furtherance of the first aim of the order; to make our Lord known and loved everywhere.
- The 'softer' benefits of trust status include the ability to seek guidance and advice on issues of Trust law and compliance from the Charity Commission, who act as a regulator and source of expert advice relating to the good governance of a charitable trust. It also ensures transparency of the Charitable Trust in matters of finance which, in turn, conveys confidence to those who donate funds that their contributions are being used in accordance with the furtherance of the Trust Objects and the TSSF Rule.

Compliance – Trustees must:

- Ensure that the charity complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular ensure that the charity prepares reports on what it has achieved and Annual Returns and accounts as required by law.
- Ensure that the charity does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there.
- Comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators (if any) which govern the activities of the charity.
- Act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets.

Duty of prudence – Trustees must:

- Ensure that the charity is and will remain solvent.
- Use charitable funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of the charity's objects.
- Avoid undertaking activities that might place the charity's endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.
- Take special care when investing the funds of the charity, or borrowing funds for the charity to use.

Duty of care – Trustees must:

- Use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal

skills and experience as needed to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient.

- Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

If things go wrong

The Charity Commission offers guidance to charities on both legal requirements and best practice to help them operate as effectively as possible and to prevent problems arising. In the few cases where serious problems have occurred we have the authority to look into them and help to put things right using the [Complaints and Appeals procedure](#). Trustees may also be personally liable for any debts or losses that the charity faces as a result. This may relate to bad financial decisions, or investments, and risks, leading to losses despite the errors being made in good faith and within trust law. Genuine errors of judgment, made whilst acting within the law, charitable trust law and the trust's governing document, may be exempt from personal liability.

Source of information

The Charity Commission booklet CC3 "The Essential trustee: what you need to know" covers the responsibilities of trustees and is updated whenever the law changes. See

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/detailed-guidance/trustees-staff-and-volunteers/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/>

iii. Code of Conduct

Key Principles of a Code of Conduct for Chapter Trustees:

- **Service** – Members of Chapter have a duty to act in the best interests of the Order as a whole and in accordance with the core objectives of the Order and its members and avoid bringing it into disrepute
- **Selflessness** – Members of Chapter have a duty to take decisions solely in terms of the Order.
- **Integrity** – Members of Chapter must not place themselves under any financial, or other, obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence them in the performance of their duties.
- **Objectivity** – Members of Chapter must make decisions solely on merit when carrying out the business of the Order.
- **Accountability and Stewardship** – Members of Chapter are accountable for their decisions and actions. Members of Chapter have a duty to consider issues on their merits, taking account of the views of others and must ensure that the Order uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.
- **Honesty** – Members of Chapter have a duty to act honestly. They must declare any private interests relating to the Order/charity and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the interests of the charity.
- **Leadership** – Members of Chapter have a duty to promote and support these principles by leadership and example, to maintain and strengthen

trust and confidence in the integrity of the Order and its members in conducting the business of the Order/charity.

- **Work considerably and respectfully with all** – Members of Chapter are expected to respect diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoid giving unnecessary offence.
- **Respect confidentiality** – Members of Chapter must understand what confidentiality means in practice for the Order, its Chapter and the individuals involved.
- **Have a sound and up-to-date knowledge of the Order and its environment** – Members of Chapter must understand how the Order works and the environment within which it operates.
- **Attend meetings and other appointments or give apologies** – Members of Chapter are expected to engage fully in discussion and decision-making processes
- **Prepare fully for meetings and all work for the Order** – Members of Chapter are expected to read papers, querying unclear or difficult things and thinking through issues in good time before meetings.
- **Actively engage in respectful discussion, debate and voting in meetings** – Members of Chapter are expected to contribute positively, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict.
- **Act jointly and accept a majority decision** – Members of Chapter will be making decisions collectively, standing by them and not acting individually unless specifically authorised to do so.

iv. Principles of Good Governance and Leadership

Principle 1 - An effective Chapter will provide good governance and leadership by understanding their role.

Members of Chapter will understand their role and responsibilities collectively and individually in relation to:

- their legal duties
- their stewardship of assets
- the provisions of the governing document
- the external environment
- the total structure of the Order

and in terms of

- setting and safeguarding the vision, values and reputation of the Order
- overseeing the work of the Order
- managing, supporting and affirming volunteers throughout the Order.

Principle 2 - An effective Chapter will provide good governance and leadership by ensuring delivery of the Order's purpose.

Chapter will ensure that the Order delivers its stated purposes or aims by:

- ensuring the Order's purposes remain relevant and valid
- developing and agreeing a long term strategy for enabling life-long formation of all members
- agreeing Team budgets
- monitoring progress and spending against plan and budget
- evaluating qualitative progress made within Strategic Plan

- reviewing and/or amending the plan and budget as appropriate.

Principle 3 - An effective Chapter will provide good governance and leadership by working effectively both as individuals and as a team.

Chapter will have a range of appropriate policies and procedures, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour to enable both individuals and Chapter to work effectively. These will include:

- encouraging Tertiaries to consider serving at the Provincial level to meet the Order's changing needs in relation to skills, experience and diversity
- providing suitable induction for new Chapter members
- providing all Chapter members with opportunities for training and development according to their needs
- periodically encouraging personal discernment of their performance both as individuals and as a team.

Principle 4 - An effective Chapter will provide good governance and leadership by exercising effective control.

As the accountable body, Chapter will ensure that:

- the Order understands and complies with all legal and regulatory requirements that apply to it
- the Order continues to have good internal financial and management controls
- it regularly identifies and reviews the major risks to which the Order is exposed and has systems to manage those risks
- delegation to committees, staff and volunteers (as applicable) works effectively and the use of delegated authority is properly supervised.

Principle 5 - An effective Chapter will provide good governance and leadership by behaving with integrity.

Chapter will:

- safeguard and promote the Order's reputation
- act according to high ethical standards
- identify, understand and manage conflicts of interest and loyalty
- maintain independence of decision making
- deliver impact that best meets the needs of beneficiaries.

Principle 6 - An effective Chapter will provide good governance and leadership by being open and accountable.

Chapter will lead the Order in being open and accountable, both internally and externally. This will include:

- open communications, informing people about the Order and its work
- appropriate consultation on significant changes to the Order's services or policies
- listening and responding to the views of non-Tertiaries with an interest in the Order's work
- handling complaints constructively, impartially and effectively
- considering the Order's responsibilities to the wider community, e.g. its environmental impact.

a. Administration of Chapter and Draft Agenda

Overview

The membership, responsibilities and overall method of working of Provincial Chapter are set out in section 3 of the Statutes of the European Province of the Third Order. Chapter meets three times a year.

The planning of the dates and the venue for Provincial Chapter will be proposed to Chapter by the Provincial Secretary (PS), with the agreement of the Minister Provincial (MP), at least one year in advance. The Spring Chapter each year will be preceded by a 'Link Tertiaries' day' beginning at mid-day, with a detailed agenda organised by the Link Tertiaries. This time allows common issues and themes to be explored, as well as the sharing of best practice. A spokesperson relays the key issues from this meeting back to full Chapter. On completion of the Link Tertiary's day, Full Chapter will convene at around noon. The Autumn Chapter (normally following Francistide) includes the presence of the Ministers Provincial of the First and Second Orders.

When the position of Minister Provincial is vacant the Provincial Formation Guardian will deputise.

Preparation for and Administration of Chapter

Timeframe	Activity
Minus 7 weeks	PS agrees draft Programme and Agenda with MP
Minus 6-4 weeks	PS issues 'Calling Notice', draft Programme, and Agenda to Chapter, including request for any Agenda adjustments and accommodation requirements
Minus 4 weeks	Chapter members confirm attendance; PS confirms accommodation and food requirements with Chapter venue management. Chapter Members send proposed Agenda changes to PS
Minus 2 weeks	PS Receives reports and papers from Chapter members; PS issues revised Agenda if necessary.
Chapter	PS notes Key Actions and dates (if Minutes Secretary (MS) absent, PS produces Minutes). Chapter agrees material for TON and any Part B element of Minutes (i.e. not for distribution to website).
Chapter plus 1 week	MS produces draft Minutes (with clearly noted action points in red) for PS and MP vetting.
Chapter + 2 weeks	PS issues Minutes (inc. Part B) to Chapter for agreement. material for TON to PCC.
Chapter + 3 weeks	Chapter provides PS with any proposed corrections or amendments to Chapter Minutes.
Chapter +4 weeks	PS issues corrected Chapter Minutes. Chapter Minutes Part A to PCC -for TSSF Website.

The 'model' draft agenda below may be preceded by a Link Tertiary meeting or a quiet day.

This is a 'topic-based' agenda.

Draft Agenda

Full Chapter

Welcome to all
Minister Provincial's Introduction.

1. Preliminary matters

- 1.1 Apologies for absence
- 1.2 to approve Minutes of last meeting
- 1.3 Matters arising from last minutes – if NOT already on agenda
- 1.4 Correspondence.

2. Time and space put aside to discuss a topic affecting the life of the Order (twice a year)

3. Reports from Link Tertiaries (full report annually in March; otherwise only 'by exception')

For guidance on producing reports for Chapter please see section III.iii.b. Reports will be taken as read, with discussion limited to key issues raised in the reports that require a Chapter response.

Link Tertiary Feedback from Link Tertiaries' day (March Chapter).

- 3.1 London & South East England
- 3.2 Central South England & Channel Islands
- 3.3 South West England
- 3.4 Wales, Severn, West Midlands & Marches
- 3.5 Central & Eastern England
- 3.6 East Midlands & Yorkshire
- 3.7 North East & North West
- 3.8 Scotland & Ireland
- 3.9 Sweden Area

4. Reports from Minister Provincial and Office holders

For guidance on producing reports for Chapter please see section III.iii.b. Reports will be taken as read, with discussion limited to key issues raised in the reports that require a Chapter response.

- 4.1 Minister Provincial - key issues arising from Report
- 4.2 Provincial Formation Guardian - key issues arising from Report
- 4.3 Provincial Novice Guardian - key issues arising from Report
- 4.4 Provincial Communications Coordinator - key issues arising from Report
- 4.5 Provincial Secretary - key issues arising from Report
- 4.6 Provincial Treasurer – key issues arising from Report

5. Ratification of Areas' Elections to Profession (with prayer) Names in Part A Minutes and in TON.

6. Release from Profession (with prayer) Names in Part B Minutes

7. Requests for Leave of Absence (with prayer) Names in Part B Minutes

8. Reports from Networks

For guidance on producing reports for Chapter please see section III.iii.b. Reports will be taken as read, with discussion limited to key issues raised in the reports that require a Chapter response.

- 8.1 JPIC
- 8.2 Franciscan Aid
- 8.3 Provincial Engagements Group
- 8.4 Study and Prayer Enabling Group
- 8.5 Contemplatives Steering Group

9. Any other business (with prior notification to Chapter)

10. Minister Provincial's brief Summary

11. Report for TON – agreement by members present of key points and responsibility for a report for **TON**.

12. Confirmation of dates and location for future Chapters

Rolling Agenda: Chapter may agree items for future discussion, with appropriate timescales.

In addition there are a number of regular reviews that are laid down, either by Statute or elsewhere in this Handbook. These are

Statutes: Every five years [Statute 7.1.5]

Equality and diversity policy: Annually [[Section III \(iv\)\(f\)](#)]

Complaints and appeals procedure: Annually [[Section V \(ii\)](#)]

Safeguarding policy: Annually [[Section III \(iv\)\(g\)](#)]

b. Guidance on Producing Reports/Papers for Chapter

As noted in the Code of Conduct for Trustees, to enable a Chapter meeting to be conducted efficiently and effectively while providing optimum time for discussion of a topic affecting the life of the Order, it is essential that Trustees:

- **Prepare fully for meetings and all work for the Order** – Members of Chapter are expected to read papers, querying unclear or difficult things and thinking through issues in good time before meetings.

To enable this to happen these are some **Key Principles** to report writing:

- **Purpose of Reports:** To inform Chapter members with a summary of important developments or examples of best practice that have arisen within the Officer's area of responsibility or within the Link Tertiary's cluster as well as any issues where a decision is required of Chapter. Include, when possible, what the Team/Network's recommendation to Chapter is.
- **Timeliness:** It is essential to the efficient working of Chapter that all Reports are issued to the Provincial Secretary on time (2 weeks prior to Chapter meeting). This enables all Chapter members to read the Report in good time and for the discussion to focus on any major issues raised within the Report that require Chapter discussion and/or response.
- **Brevity:** With so many Reports for Chapter members to read before the meeting, it is important that they are kept brief and focused. It is suggested that no Report needs to be more than 2 sides of A4.
- **Highlight important issues, where a decision is required of Chapter and/or where there are financial implications:** Do this using bullet points whenever possible

Additional Guidance

For Officers of Teams and Networks

The brief summary would be from your most recent team/network meeting in a form that works for both the membership of the Team and as a summary for Chapter so there is no duplicating of work for the convenor.

For Link Tertiary Cluster Reports

The annual report (for March Chapter) will cover key issues in their cluster: spiritual health; lifelong formation and development; sharing of best practice (within Local Groups and Areas); innovations; and concerns and questions for Chapter. Area Ministers will be encouraged to make an annual Area Report, after the Francistide meetings, to inform the LT discussions prior to the March Chapter.

Reports for the other two Chapter meetings will contain only non-routine uses that, 'by exception' require priority consideration by Chapter.

c. Quorum and Procedural Guidelines for Discussions

Quorum: This has not been set out in the Statutes, so it is suggested that 50% +1 of current Trustees of Chapter should be present in order for the business of Chapter to be carried out. This allows for different numbers of LT's depending on how Clusters are formed or reformed.

However, if neither the Minister Provincial nor the Provincial Formation Guardian is able to be present, Chapter will consider jointly whether to postpone the meeting.

Procedural Guidelines for Discussions *(to be used alongside Code of Conduct)* **Chapter and its members should:**

- Take decisions and abide by them (a vote will be taken if any Trustee requests one)
- When a vote is taken, results will be recorded in the Minutes
- Respect one another as possessing individual and professional skills, knowledge and responsibilities
- Be honest, open and constructive
- Show determination, tolerance and sensitivity – rigorous and challenging questioning, tempered by respect
- Be courteous and respect freedom to speak, disagree, or remain silent
- Support the Chair and colleagues in maximizing the scope and variety of viewpoints heard
- Ensure individual points are relevant and short
- Listen carefully to all ideas and comments and be tolerant to other points of view
- Regard challenge as a test of the robustness of arguments
- Be sensitive to colleagues' needs for support when challenging or being challenged
- Ensure no one becomes isolated in expressing their view
- Treat all ideas with respect
- Allow differences to be forgotten
- Show group support and loyalty towards each other
- Read all papers before the meeting, clarify any points of detail before the meeting, be punctual and participate fully
- Focus discussion on material issues and the resolution of issues
- Whenever possible issues that do not require a full Chapter discussion should be resolved outside the meeting by the individual Trustees concerned
- Make the most of time

Chapter members should not:

- Refer to past systems of mistakes as being responsible for today's situation
- Act as 'stoppers' or 'blockers'
- Regard any arrangements as unchangeable or unchallengeable
- Adopt territorial attitudes
- Give offence or take offence
- Regard papers presented as being 'rubberstamped' without discussion or agreement
- Act in an attacking or dismissive manner
- Become obsessed by detail and lose the strategic picture
- Breach confidentiality

adapted from "Good Governance Handbook" of the Good Governance Institute and Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership

d. Confidentiality

1. It is the responsibility of the Minister Provincial, and at Area level, the Area Minister, to decide who shall share information.
2. Information given in confidence should not be shared with anyone other than designated Team or Chapter members, unless absolutely necessary (e.g. safeguarding – [see page 21](#)). Where agreement to share is given, it is very important that those who receive such information clearly understand the requirements of confidentiality.
3. Whenever a Tertiary shares private personal information with the Local Group, that information is confidential unless specific permission to pass it on is asked for and received.
4. Make all Tertiaries aware that discussions and decisions about individuals may have to be made confidentially and that not everything to do with a group can be decided by general discussion.
5. Take extreme care when mentioning an individual for prayer. Even when a situation is disguised in an effort to make it anonymous, there may still be a risk of recognition and identification. Care should also be taken about who is present when playing back answering machine messages, and it may be better to use land mail rather than email when discussing confidential information.
6. Written records should be kept at Area level so that Provincial Chapter may be fully informed should an appeal be made. Records so kept must be secure, clear and open to the person to whom they refer. Those compiling the records should be prepared to be accountable for their contents. (Be aware of data protection legislation; if in doubt check with the TSSF Chapter)

Note: 1 – It is understood that the above guidance was produced and ‘tabled’ at Chapter (but not officially accepted or voted on) prior to 2006.

Note: 2 – The Guidance to Chapter Trustees, approved by Chapter in June 2011 contains a statement about the need for confidentiality and mutual respect in terms of Trust business. This is an extract from Charity Commission guidance.

e. Office holder discernment at the three year stage

Principles

- 1 We recognise that finding new office holders is not always easy in TSSF, and that willingness to serve the community is much to be valued. At the same time we need that service to be effective in the interests of the TSSF community.
- 2 A second term of three years contributes to this by making good use of the experience gained in the first three years. Nonetheless although a second term is an option, it is not a presumption.
- 3 The discernment is primarily that of the office holder but also involves other Tertiaries who are able to give constructive comments. However the office holder will decide in the light of such comments whether to continue in office.
- 4 Members of TSSF Provincial Chapter are Trustees as well as Tertiaries, with legal responsibilities for the proper conduct of the Trust and therefore of TSSF. The process described first (5.0) is specifically for Chapter use. However it is strongly recommended to TSSF area teams and networks that they should consider using these principles when making similar important decisions.

5 Provincial Chapter

- 5.1 The Provincial Secretary will write to Chapter members, seeking their comments on the contribution of the post holder concerned. These comments are intended to help the individual assess whether or how they might go forward during their second three years in office.
- 5.2 These comments are not intended to be a formal performance appraisal, but they have a similar purpose of trying to reach a collective decision about what is in the best interests of the TSSF community, not just of the person concerned.
- 5.3 The Provincial Secretary will collate the responses and forward them 'in confidence' to the Minister Provincial and to the person concerned who will then make their own decision whether to undertake a second three years.
- 5.4 For Provincial Secretary's discernment, the Minister Provincial will conduct this part of the process.
- 5.5 For the Minister Provincial's discernment, the Provincial Secretary will write to members of Chapter, but will also include the Bishop Protector. The feedback for the Minister Provincial will be sent in confidence to the Bishop Protector before being reported to Chapter.
- 5.6 During this process the person concerned will seek comment from those with whom he or she works. For example, Link Tertiaries will consult the Area Teams in their cluster group. Others may consult specialist groups such as the Communications Group, or Formation Teams. They may also wish to consult their Spiritual Director.

- 5.7 On completion of this phase the person concerned will advise the Minister Provincial of their decision. In the case of the Minister Provincial, he or she would advise both Chapter and the Bishop Protector.
- 5.8 After this process, time may be needed to identify a new office holder. Office holders should agree their own process 6 months before their term ends and others should be told of its conclusion within three months. This will allow 3 months to find a successor if needed.
- 5.9 In exceptional cases other Chapter members may believe an office holder's decision to continue despite contrary advice should be formally contested. In such circumstances they can invoke the TSSF policy: "[Complaints and appeals](#)". In the case of Provincial Chapter a confidence vote may be taken.

6 Area teams, and other networks

- 6.1 Area teams and networks have discretion about how to approach these decisions but are strongly recommended by Chapter to consider treating them similarly, or at least with similar seriousness.
- 6.2 We should be flexible when it is clear that no other candidate is available, but nonetheless give priority not only to this discernment process, but also to being pro-active about encouraging others to take up TSSF offices.
- 6.3 It is for area teams to decide whether to use a liturgy of affirmation, or similar, when office holders begin a second three year term.

f. Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy Statement

The Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis (TSSF) is committed to encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination in both its role as a Religious Order and as a Charity. We aim to create a culture that respects and values each others' differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop in life long formation as well as to contribute to the life of the Order through volunteering their time and talents.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all members of our Order and not to discriminate on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, Christian denomination or age. TSSF opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All members of TSSF will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for training and volunteering will be on the basis of skills and ability.

Principles

TSSF's commitment to Equality and Diversity is:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all members are recognised and valued.
- To create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- To ensure appropriate training and development opportunities are available.
- To treat breaches of the equality policy and any complaints or appeals about them seriously, and to take disciplinary action when required.
- To provide information to all members so that they are fully aware of the issues relating to Equality and Diversity and their responsibilities relating to it.
- To ensure the policy is fully supported by Chapter.
- To monitor and review the policy annually.

Procedures

Positive action

- TSSF will act positively in using the Equality and Diversity Policy as a means of making public its commitment to provide equal opportunities to all members.
- TSSF encourages all members to apply for suitable opportunities locally and provincially and to seek training in particular skills.
- The Equality and Diversity Policy forms part of the Chapter Handbook.
- Any form of discrimination by any member is treated very seriously and where appropriate will be dealt with through complaints and appeals and/or using the Disciplinary Procedure.

People with disabilities

- TSSF will make genuine efforts to welcome people with disabilities and to encourage Local Groups and Areas to take reasonable steps to ensure that their members have access to meetings and events, regardless of disability.
- TSSF, with the support of the Provincial Disability Team, will regularly review its communications policy in respect of documents in [alternative formats](#) for members and will try to overcome any problems faced where practicable and within resources available.
- TSSF has an Accessibility Guidelines document available to provide support to Local Groups, Areas and Provincial Chapter. It is attached as an [Appendix to this Handbook](#). All Area Teams should be aware of the content of this; it can also be downloaded from the TSSF website.

Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

- TSSF will take seriously any complaints of discrimination and will not victimise people who make such complaints.
- Members will be made aware as part of the novice training process of their responsibilities in relation to Equality and Diversity and that discriminatory behaviour will be fully investigated and dealt with using the Complaints and Appeals Process.

Bullying and Harassment

- TSSF upholds the right of all members to be treated with respect and dignity and to participate in an atmosphere free of bullying and harassment.
- All members are responsible for ensuring that their own behaviour is sensitive to others and for ensuring that they do not condone or support the bullying or harassing behaviour of others.
- All complaints of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously and should be raised using the Complaints and Appeals Process. All complaints will be investigated and where appropriate, disciplinary procedures will be followed.

g. Safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children

Introduction

"Safeguarding" (previously called child protection and/or the protection of vulnerable adults) has an increasingly high profile. Undoubtedly TSSF wants to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults and children, as far as possible.

We have included safeguarding within the governance work because it is inappropriate for TSSF to lack such arrangements when churches, dioceses and other orders have policies and guidance in place. The material that follows is based on that used by CSF / SSF, itself based on the safeguarding policies of the Diocese of Bath and Wells which derive from wider Church of England policies.

Key issues for TSSF

TSSF's safeguarding policy must be robust enough to reflect the seriousness of the topic, but ideally without creating disproportionate anxiety among Tertiaries. It may help to get this balance right if we are clear about the distinctive issues for the order:

- 1 The policy only applies to situations where Tertiaries are **acting in their role as members of TSSF**. Concerns about safeguarding related to a Tertiary involved in e.g. a parish church, local school or neighbourhood or private initiative would initially and primarily be dealt with by other organisations. (The qualification to this is that if a Tertiary is suspected of abuse, TSSF may be notified and would have to ensure the safety of vulnerable people within its own activities.)
- 2 In practice TSSF is much more likely to have to act to ensure the protection of [vulnerable adults \(see page 22\)](#) than of children. Because of this we have concentrated on adults in this policy statement. However it is important to note that the full CSF / SSF policies which underlie this policy are available from the First Order via the Chapter lead and will be used wherever necessary by TSSF office holders with safeguarding responsibilities.
- 3 While detailed procedural guidance is available, its key single point is that if **abuse** is suspected it should be notified to the relevant authorities i.e. the local Social Services who will involve the police promptly if necessary. The over-riding consideration is always the protection of vulnerable people (and certainly **not** the protection of TSSF's reputation).
- 4 We can never rule out the possibility of serious direct abuse of a vulnerable adult within the TSSF community. However in practice the most likely form of abuse may be harassment or bullying, which in turn may be part of an inter-personal dispute such as within a local group. Even if it is not considered abusive, borderline behaviour of this sort could still be subject to action under TSSF's complaints and appeals policy.
- 5 A number of Tertiaries would themselves be considered vulnerable under

the safeguarding policy (the definitions are [below, on this page](#)) such as through age and/or physical or psychological frailty. Some Tertiaries have mental health problems. It is these Tertiaries within our community whose welfare we are most likely to need to safeguard.

- 6 Nonetheless it is also possible that serial or persistent complaints by a vulnerable Tertiary might themselves constitute harassment of another. This demonstrates how carefully such issues must be treated and investigated. As suggested above, unless the harassed person is also vulnerable, this would need a pastoral or complaint approach rather than a specific safeguarding response.

Safeguarding lead roles within TSSF

To ensure effective safeguarding within TSSF a sufficient number and range of office holders will be fully familiar with this policy and able to apply it – and all Tertiaries should be made aware of it. To achieve this:

- 1 One member of Provincial Chapter will have a lead advisory role for the Safeguarding policy (currently this is John Wiltshire – Link Tertiary for the London and SE cluster);
- 2 All Chapter members must fully understand the policy, especially Link Tertiaries who are as likely as any to field safeguarding enquiries from areas;
- 3 Area teams must ensure that all their members understand the policy, and that one team member has a lead responsibility for keeping up to date with it. This will include promoting it e.g. at area meetings or in area bulletins.
- 4 The above lead people will between them be responsible for monitoring the use of the policy and identifying key issues. This will include an annual report to Provincial Chapter by the Chapter lead office holder.

GUIDANCE ON SAFEGUARDING OF VULNERABLE ADULTS (From the CSF / SSF policies)

What is a vulnerable adult?

A 'vulnerable adult' is defined in legislation as any person aged 18 years and over who is in receipt of one of the following regulated activities.

- provision of personal care that is needed due to illness, age or disability;
- provision of social work by a social worker;
- provision of assistance, in relation to general household matters, due to illness, age or disability;
- provision of assistance where there is a formal arrangement in place to make decisions on financial or welfare matters on behalf of another person;
- transportation where this is due to age, health or disability.

However we may all find ourselves vulnerable at times, and we should expect to be treated with dignity and respect at these times, and to treat others in the same way. The TSSF therefore has a wider definition than the strictly legal

definition above and recognises that people can be vulnerable for many reasons which can include groups such as the frail and elderly, those with a mental disorder, including dementia, mental illness or personality disorder, those with a physical or sensory disability, a learning disability, severe physical illness, and those who misuse substances. In addition adults may be vulnerable because of particular circumstances, for example emotional or spiritual vulnerability at a specific point in life, for example bereavement, or discerning vocation; or those who are dependent on our care such as a homeless person or asylum seeker participating in a TSSF area initiative.

What kinds of mistreatment should we be aware of?

Abuse concerns the misuse of power, control or authority, and may take the form of spiritual, physical, emotional/psychological, financial/legal, or sexual abuse, or neglect.

What should be our core values in interacting with vulnerable adults?

Vulnerable adults have a right to:

- be treated with dignity and respect
 - privacy – to be free from unwanted intrusion into their lives and affairs
 - lead an independent life, that may include a degree of risk
 - be able to choose how to lead their life
 - be included; this includes questions of physical access, provision of materials in forms which they can use, and in general enabling all people to play an active part within the limits of their abilities and strengths.
1. If we suspect abuse of a vulnerable adult we will act without delay. If the person is at **significant risk of harm, or it appears that crime may be being committed** we will report our concerns immediately to social services or the police, as well as to a TSSF lead office holder for safeguarding.
 2. If the harm is less severe we will attempt to address our concern less formally, by talking initially to those with responsibility for care (for example relatives of a very vulnerable Tertiary, or possibly the manager of a care home, or day centre) or those with expertise in this area such as members of a relevant voluntary organisation. Many vulnerable people rely on their carers for support, shelter and care and therefore the reporting of possible mistreatment needs to be undertaken with sensitivity.
 3. If we feel that a vulnerable person within our community is not being protected but immediate involvement of Social Services is not appropriate (usually meaning that we need advice first) we should address our concerns to the area TSSF lead office holder for safeguarding and probably through them to the Chapter lead person and/or the Minister Provincial. However such advice should be taken very quickly and certainly within seven days. Those involved and especially the lead office holder will in all cases keep a written record of what has been said and done in responding to a complaint or suspicion of abuse. This record will be kept in a safe place, and a copy will also be sent to the Chapter lead and Minister Provincial.
 4. If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of TSSF the person against whom the allegation has been made should withdraw, or be withdrawn, from all contact with the vulnerable adult or adults concerned, and any other vulnerable adults, while a full enquiry is conducted. This may involve special arrangements e.g. within a local group. If neither Social

Services nor the police need to be involved the process of investigation should follow the outline of the guidelines laid down in *A Handbook of the Religious Life*, 2004, paragraph 1407, wherever TSSF's policy does not lay down a process. However we should not undertake such an investigation without consulting Social Services first.

5. We will fully cooperate with statutory agencies (usually Social Services and/or the police) during any investigation they make into allegations concerning a member of the community.
6. We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to any vulnerable adult who has suffered abuse.
7. We will care for and supervise any member of our community known to have offended against a vulnerable adult.
8. The Chapter lead office holder and Minister Provincial are responsible for ensuring that this policy is being carried out, and will report annually to Chapter.

Criminal records checks

The Disclosure and Barring Service (previously the Criminal Records Bureau) have confirmed that Tertiaries do not need to apply for a criminal records check, to show that they have no previous relevant convictions that might suggest a vulnerable person could be at risk. (This would only apply, exceptionally, if within TSSF activity a tertiary is regularly caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of persons under 18 and or vulnerable adults.)

CHILD PROTECTION

The protection of children and young people is similar in its principles, but as most Tertiaries will know particularly pressing in its public profile and procedural and legal requirements. For example those who have contact with children and young people are subject to checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (previously the Criminal Records Bureau). The CSF / SSF policy is not summarised here, not because it is less important than vulnerable adults issues but on the contrary to avoid over-simplifying it. TSSF practice will draw on the First Order's policies and procedures.

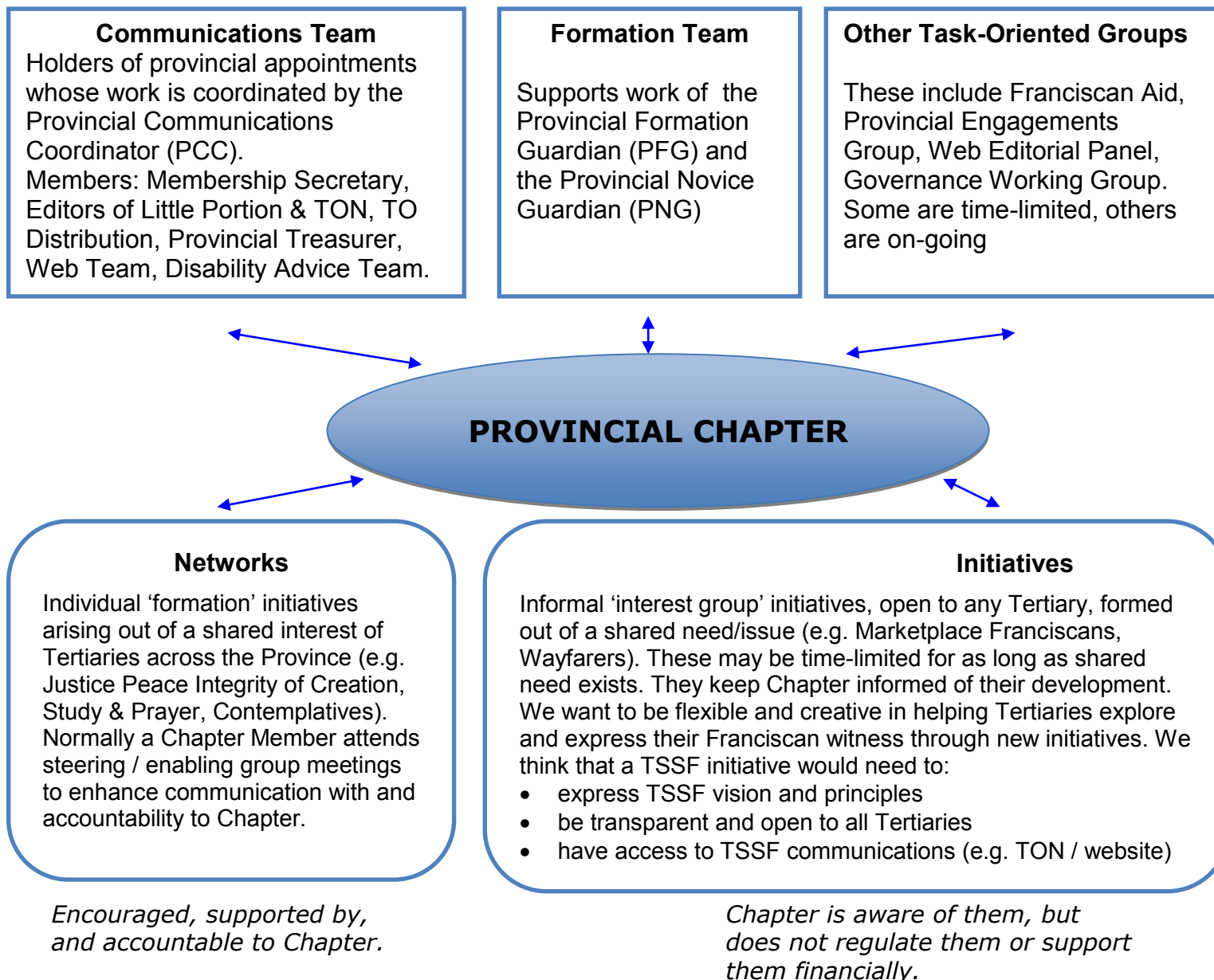
As in dealing with vulnerable adults, the key single principle and practice is that when we suspect abuse of a child we should report it promptly to Social Services or the police.

We recognise that Tertiaries in their TSSF role make very little if any contact, other than passing contact at events, with children. However, even passing contact may lead to an allegation. In any case, in all matters of child and adult protection any desire to "keep issues in proportion" should never be allowed to undermine our commitment to rigorous safeguarding.

IV. Provincial Teams, Networks, Groups and Initiatives

To enable more effective delegation of tasks within Chapter and to support the work of specific officers, *Provincial Teams* have been set up over time. Currently, these include a **Provincial Communications Team** and a **Provincial Formation Team**. Other task-oriented groups are set up from time to time.

Additionally, out of a shared perceived need on the part of individual Tertiaries across the Province, some provincial *networks* and *initiatives* have been established. The **Marketplace Franciscans** was an initiative formed in 1986 but after nearly 20 years it disbanded when the members agreed that its need had been met. The **Contemplatives Network** formed in 1999 (originally named 'Solitaries Network'); the **JPIC Network** formed in 2003; and the **Study & Prayer Network** was set up in 2005 (originally named the Third Order Studies Initiative). These networks have tended to see themselves as facilitating lifelong formation within the Order. The historical background of these networks was included in the *franciscan* issue featuring the Third Order in January 2011 (Vol 23/1). The following diagram indicates the differences between the groups:



V. Pastoral Care and Dealing with Conflict within TSSF (supplementing Section 6 of the Statutes)

i. Pastoral Care

Mutual pastoral care is fundamental to the life of the community: tending to the needs of each other and offering support and care which may include looking after the personal, social and spiritual wellbeing of each other. It takes many forms, but in particular: listening, supporting, affirming, encouraging and befriending in a non-judgmental way.

- The Pastoral Care of fellow Chapter members is something that should be at the heart of all relationships within the Order, just as it is with members of our Local Groups, Areas and Clusters.
- It is explicit in the Role Descriptions of some of the Officers of Chapter and the Bishop Protector as well as in our Principles.
- It is implicit in the Code of Conduct and in the Procedural Guidelines for Discussions.
- It resides in the rituals of welcome and farewell of Members of Chapter
- It forms the foundation of affirming, encouraging and supporting the volunteers within the Third Order at every level.
- It does not 'see' colour, race, gender, ability or belief system.
- It is what enables Local Groups to look after the needs of members who are housebound, ill, disabled, without internet access, solitary, or isolated geographically.
- It is what holds a dispersed Order together in kindness, generosity and love.

ii. Complaints and Appeals

- 1 Tertiaries should experience TSSF as a supportive, well-ordered community where all are treated respectfully.
- 2 Franciscan principles such as obedience and humility are fully consistent with the right of Tertiaries to be treated respectfully and to have access to redress in the case of unacceptable behaviour by others within the TSSF community.
- 3 Where possible, conflict and other concerns should be dealt with relatively informally close to where they occur, using the Franciscan pastoral principles in the TSSF Area Team Handbook. These pastoral principles can be applied to Chapter, network steering groups and other settings as well as to the Areas.
- 4 Very often informal, and any subsequent, action will be taken within the TSSF Area. Mediation should always be considered if initial, informal approaches are not successful ([see 11 below, page 28](#)).
- 5 However where informal resolution is not effective, Tertiaries have access to a clear formal process for dealing with complaints including irresolvable conflict, wrongdoing or abuse.
- 6 This policy constitutes the TSSF complaints policy. All notifications under this policy, however expressed, will be treated as and called "complaints". The policy also contains provision for appeals against decisions made about complaints.
- 7 The word "complaints" is used broadly. It may include allegations about:
 - consistently difficult or disruptive behaviour that has not been resolved informally despite efforts to do so;
 - significant failure by office holders to follow agreed TSSF rules or customs. This may include procedural or financial abuse;
 - failure to provide important information;
 - for Chapter members, failure to follow the legal duties of Trustees;
 - allegations of psychological, emotional, physical or sexual abuse. These may include persistently rude or belittling behaviour (see the Safeguarding policy, [above, page 21](#)).
- 8 The formal stage of the policy is based on escalation of complaints to appropriate TSSF office holders, who will determine whether there is a case to answer and if so how it will be investigated. They will then make a decision and/or recommendation and communicate it to the complainant. The process, including appeals, is shown in the table below: "[Dealing with complaints and appeals in TSSF: processes](#)".
- 9 This policy must not result in a litigious culture within TSSF. We are simply providing a framework the Order previously lacked, to be used only when informal, local, pastoral approaches have not worked. A formal complaint need not be accepted at all if it is obviously mischievous or malicious (NB: an appeal would still be possible).

- 10 TSSF officers dealing with complaints or appeals should be aware of the order's Safeguarding policy ([page 21, above](#)).
- 11 The decisions reached by responsible officers will vary, but may include:
 - complaint not accepted at the initial stage, and not investigated
 - complaint investigated, but not upheld;
 - proposal to resolve problem through a further Franciscan pastoral approach e.g. more dialogue; mediation; apology; training; (NB: some Tertiaries are trained mediators, and are willing to assist others to resolve difficulties.)
 - recommendation to change TSSF rules or customs;
 - subject to endorsement by Chapter, exceptional disciplinary action e.g. removal from group or role, such as in an area team. or network or initiative steering group; removal from provincial office; removal from TSSF.
- 12 The normal maximum time scale for concluding complaints under this policy will be three months. The conclusion will take the form of a formal letter from the responsible officer to the complainant.
- 13 Formal investigations and decisions based on this policy will be conducted by office holders and other Tertiaries independent of the complaint. They will keep written records, retaining them for one year after the conclusion of the complaint including any appeal process.
- 14 Most complaints will be internal to TSSF. There is no separate policy for external complaints, but both the principles and the process guidance in this policy can be applied to these in practice.
- 15 All complaints and their resolutions should be reported to Provincial Chapter. Chapter will review complaints activity annually.

See the following [table of responsibilities](#) for complaints and appeals

Dealing with complaints and appeals in TSSF

Responsibilities

(NOTE: this table shows individual responsibilities for complaints if and when informal resolution has not been successful. The important role of teams and groups, especially area teams, at the informal stage cannot be over-emphasised.)

Complaint against	Responsible (receives complaint)	Investigation (if decided upon)	Decision-maker(s) (includes relevant pastoral care)	Appeals to
A Tertiary (re an Area matter)	Area Minister	AM consults Link Tertiary. AM plus another member of the Area Team	AM plus another AM, and consult LT	MP and PFG
A Tertiary (re a major issue e.g. abuse, or a non-Area matter e.g. JPIC; S+P)	MP and PFG (unless either is subject to complaint)	Two Chapter members (one national role; one LT), plus one other with relevant experience e.g. a steering group member	MP / PFG (inform Chapter re more serious matters as appropriate)	Minister General
AM	ditto	ditto	ditto	ditto
Chapter or steering group member	ditto	ditto	MP / PFG (inform Chapter)	ditto
MP or PFG	PFG or MP (i.e. whichever is not involved) Consults Minister General	PFG or MP, plus Minister General, identify 3 Chapter members plus one other independent Tertiary with relevant experience	PFG or MP plus Minister General. If serious, full Chapter	ditto

To be used alongside the full policy

NB: the Minister General of TSSF is outside the European Province and may be consulted about any sensitive issue, normally but not only by the Minister Provincial

Abbreviations

AM Area Minister
 MP Minister Provincial
 PFG Provincial Formation Guardian (deputy Minister Provincial)

VI. Communication within the Order

i. Principles and Good Practice

A vision of the Order is of a community of people inspired by Francis and Clare and seeking to live a Gospel-inspired life with humility, love and joy. We are a **dispersed** community and so communication is at the heart of our being an Order and being in community together.

- **Humility** may be linked to willingness to receive and reluctance to send communications.
- **Love** may be linked to a pastoral care underlying every communication.
- **Joy** is the spirit in which we hope communications are sent and received.

Communication is not just from Chapter to Tertiaries, but the framework which Chapter maintains is crucial, and this relies on information sent from Areas to keep records up to date and administrative communications sent from Chapter, for example about elections to Offices. Once the framework is in place, there is a serious responsibility given to Area Officers to keep the system working smoothly, something that is done willingly, joyfully and efficiently by many.

It may be helpful to review what happens (or should happen) at present. [Note the availability of alternative formats \(see below\).](#)

A TSSF calendar:

January	"franciscan" sent to all Tertiaries
February	"Little Portion" and printed Provincial Intercessions List sent to all Tertiaries
Feb/March	Chapter meets
April	TON emailed to Area contacts for onward distribution
May	"franciscan" sent to all Tertiaries
June	Chapter meets
July	TON emailed to Area contacts for onward distribution
August	"Little Portion" and printed Provincial Intercessions List sent to all Tertiaries
September	"franciscan" sent to all Tertiaries
October	Francistide renewal for professed Tertiaries; reports to Area Formation Guardians
October	Chapter meets
November	TON emailed to Area contacts for onward distribution

"franciscan" dates are those on the magazine cover; it often arrives sooner.

TON (Third Order News)

TON is an electronic publication that is sent out by the Editor of TON to an Area contact for onward distribution to Tertiaries in each Area. Normally the contact is the Area Communications Coordinator (ACC). If none is designated, the Area Secretary is the contact. The ACC is asked to let the TON Editor know when it has been distributed onward, so it can be followed up if necessary. The details of onward distribution are up to each Area; every Tertiary (i.e. professed member or novice) should be sent a copy (unless s/he expressly

requests to be left out). **TON** normally appears three times a year, in April, July and November, a few weeks after Chapter.

Items for **TON** from any Tertiary should be sent to the Editor of **TON** who may accept them, decline them or suggest revision (probably shortening). Typical items are announcements about retreats, pilgrimages and events of expected interest to Tertiaries. **TON** also carries information and messages from Chapter and Provincial Officers (see also Chapter Papers and Minutes, below).

"Little Portion" and "franciscan"

"*Little Portion*" is the magazine of the Third Order; "*franciscan*" is the magazine of the First Order; both are sent to every Tertiary. "*Little Portion*" is sent from Freeland; "*franciscan*" is sent from Hilfield. Current addresses need to be with the TSSF Membership Secretary a few weeks before each the mailing. In a year there are two issues of "*Little Portion*", with cover dates of February and August and three issues of "*franciscan*" with cover dates of January, May and September. A Third Order printed intercessions list is mailed with "*Little Portion*" and a First Order list with "*franciscan*".

Chapter Papers and Minutes

Chapter normally meets in February or March, in June and in October. Reports to Chapter are expected two weeks before Chapter. A draft of the Minutes is sent to Chapter members a week or so after Chapter and after feedback. Draft Minutes are sent out and are published on the TSSF web site, with the omission of any matters deemed confidential or personal. At the same time the report from Chapter - items that Chapter wishes to draw to the attention of the Order - are sent, with the list of those approved for profession, to the Editor of **TON** for publication. Tertiaries who have died are remembered during worship at the October Chapter each year and a list is published in the November **TON**.

Link Tertiaries

Link Tertiaries often send a report from Chapter to Area Teams for onward transmission. There are several issues here:

- Timing – this should allow onward transmission at the same time as **TON**, which comes after Chapter with Bullet Points from Chapter.
- Accuracy and consistency –A procedure for ensuring this should be in place.
- Duplication – Link Tertiaries should be sensitive to this and exercise restraint.

Communications from Chapter

The Provincial Secretary (PS) is responsible for sending communications from Chapter that are intended for distribution to all Third Order members. These tend to be about provincial elections, but may include letters from the Minister Provincial or Bishop Protector, consultations or other information Chapter has decided it is important for all Tertiaries to be aware of. These documents are sent by the Provincial Secretary to the ACC's in each Area for onward dissemination (and confirmation to the PS of that dissemination). The duties with regard to elections may be delegated to a Returning Officer.

Area Team responsibilities

- Changes of membership or office within an Area Team should be communicated by the Area Team to the Membership Secretary. This affects both central records and the Intercessions List.
- TSSF depends on input from Areas and individuals to provide quality publications and up to date intercessions lists.
- The Area Team is responsible for ensuring that there are arrangements to send printed copies to all non-users of e-mail in the Area. This may include delegation to the Local Group where a 'buddy system' could be put in place to pass on material to those not on email.

Communication is a two-way process

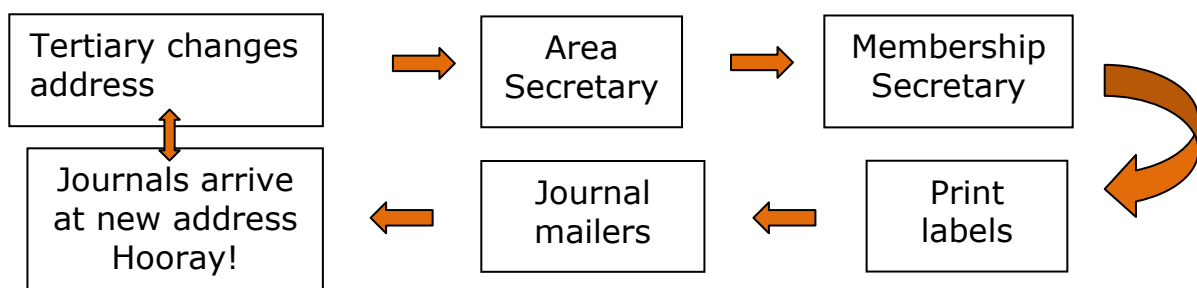
- Link Tertiaries report to each Chapter, having received reports from Area Teams.
- Any Tertiary may communicate directly with any Provincial Office-holder.
- Area Teams have a role in encouraging the two-way communication between all Tertiaries and ensuring that no feelings of dissatisfaction with Office-holders are suppressed, but are communicated to the relevant persons.

Information for Tertiaries: Manual revisions

Paper copies of major revisions to the Manual and other documents are mailed with "*Little Portion*". Minor updates will be distributed electronically (by email and on the web site). Areas are expected to look after those without access to email and the internet.

Information about Tertiaries moving (or changing contact details)

Changes of address, telephone number, email address should be sent to the Membership Secretary, with a copy to the PCC. This is the responsibility of the individual Tertiary; Area Teams normally maintain a record and inform the Membership Secretary and the PCC of changes. A change of Local Group should be communicated to the Membership Secretary by the Area. A change of Area means that details need to be communicated to the new Area. Chapter has endorsed the idea that the Area Team in the new Area should appoint a "Welcomer" to take responsibility for introducing the newly arrived Tertiary to the Local Group and Area.



Use of the TSSF web pages, <http://www.tssf.org.uk>

- TSSF should be able to use the latest means of communication effectively. In doing this, people without access to the Internet must be cared for and included as far as they wish, but **not** by denying ourselves the use of modern media.
- There should be procedures at Area and Local Group level to enable all to participate as fully as they wish. Two possibilities are: i) a "buddy" system, pairing each non-internet-user with an internet-user, and ii) finding a Local Group internet person who keeps those in the Local Group who wish it up to date with what is being communicated.
- Material offered for publication on the website is reviewed on behalf of Chapter before being accepted. Currently there is a Web Editorial Panel to do this.

Email to TSSF officers

- TSSF has a number of "generic" email addresses which it uses so that email gets to the relevant people. These are listed on the "[Contacts](#)" page of the website.
- For example, an email to *novguard@tssf.org.uk* will go to the current holder of the office of Provincial Novice Guardian. Replies do not come from these generic addresses but from the personal email address of the office-holder.

Confidentiality and data protection

- Chapter has a duty of ensuring that information required for necessary communication is made available.
- Every Tertiary must have access to the contact details for their Area Team members, Link Tertiary and Provincial Office-holders. **Some** of this information will be in Little Portion and **TON** and on the TSSF web pages.
- Area Teams should have contact details for all other Areas. This is important for helping Tertiaries who move to keep in touch with TSSF in their new locations.

Information about and for Tertiaries with disabilities

Local Groups and Area Teams should be aware of the communications and other needs of their members and support them accordingly. They are encouraged to liaise with the Provincial Disability Team about any special communication needs required within their Area. Any Tertiary with a disability may also contact the Provincial Disability Team, either directly or if necessary through a friend. They should also inform their Area Team.

Alternative formats

TSSF endeavours to provide publications in alternative formats for those with visual or mobility impairments (e.g. unable to hold documents). These, typically, are large print paper copies, audio CDs, PDF computer files or Braille if requested. Contact the PDA (Provincial Disability Advice) Team for more information or [see Appendix v](#).

ii. Elections

Elections to Chapter (for all officers/Trustees) are the responsibility of the Provincial Secretary; this responsibility may be delegated, with the agreement of Chapter, to a Returning Officer. Area elections (for Area Minister and Area Formation Guardian) are the responsibility of the Area Team.

Elections - communications issues

Calls for nominations and voting papers usually happen predictably and communications should be planned to go out with **TON** and Link reports where possible. Professed Tertiaries are strongly encouraged to vote when offered the opportunity. Each candidate provides an election address and contact details are made available so that they may be questioned.

Elections - code of conduct

A Code of conduct was approved by Chapter, 12 October 2013. It covers the conduct of all elections of TSSF office holders.

Code of Conduct for Elections in TSSF

We believe that, as an Order, **discernment** should be our guiding principle:

- **discernment** when nominating individuals for office;
- **discernment** by the nominee as to her/his ability to fulfill the duties of the office and, in the case of Chapter members, to participate fully as a trustee of TSSF;
- **discernment** by the membership when deciding for whom to vote.

The objectives of the Code are to:

- Ensure that the discernment process is carried out in an honest, fair and respectful way.
- Ensure that voting by the membership is transparent and without inducements or pressure.
- Protect the standing and reputation of candidates, members, and officers/trustees.

Terms of the Code

1. During the election process members are expected to act in good faith and with integrity and honesty.
2. All communications, written or oral should be courteous, truthful and respectful; they should not misrepresent, nor mislead voters as to a candidate's qualifications or experience; and they should avoid criticism that has no bearing on a candidature or that is based on unsubstantiated allegations.
3. No one should offer or imply any inducement in relation to a candidature, or possible election.
4. Candidates should never touch, observe or handle anyone else's ballot paper. Anyone who is asked to give assistance in completing a ballot paper, should always refer the voter to the Returning Officer or someone on the Area Team who may be able to help.
5. If a candidate is normally the person responsible for forwarding on ballot papers (i.e., Provincial Secretary, Link Tertiary, Area Communication Coordinator or Area Secretary), then for all communications to do with this particular election, another office holder must temporarily take on this responsibility.

Complaints

Complaints about the conduct of elections will be dealt with through the [complaints and appeals procedure \(above\)](#).

It is the right and duty of all our members to see that these principles are observed, in spirit as well as letter, and where appropriate to bring to the attention of the Returning Officer any behaviour which they consider to be contrary to them.

"As a guiding principle, if there is any doubt about a particular activity, [candidates] should ask themselves "What would a reasonable observer think?" **Electoral Commission**

This document was adapted from guidance on the Electoral Commission website: www.electoralcommission.org.uk

VII. APPENDICES

Appendix i. Full Role Descriptions

Conditions of Election (Statute 5.7.1) [*these apply to Chapter and Area Team elections*]: A professed Tertiary elected by professed Tertiaries in the electorate, which is laid down in Statute 5.1.1, for an initial period of three years. A further period of three years may follow, subject to the policy on discernment ([see page 17](#)). Not eligible for re-election to the same office for three years. The holding of more than one elected Office is not normally allowed (Statute 5.6).

MINISTER PROVINCIAL (MP)

Overview

(Extracted from Provincial Review, consultation Document, October 1998)

In an emerging and expanding organisation a particular question arises about the roles and responsibilities of Provincial Office bearers. In a religious organisation, and particularly in a Religious Order, history and theology need to be brought to bear.

The MP has a series of tasks to perform, some of these are to do with the admission and withdrawal of the professed, some are representative and are undertaken on behalf of all those in the Order, while others are administrative. The over-arching concept is that of *episcopo* or pastoral oversight and of a person who both 'holds' the vision for the moment and who recreates a renewed vision by shared debate.

The particular task of any senior person is to re-focus an organisation, to unite the members around an agreed set of tasks and to guide them forward. In the case of the Third Order many responsibilities are shared ones. Particularly, the MP has a duty in a 'shared responsibility' way with Provincial office bearers, whilst retaining the appropriate authority of the role.

Purpose of the Office

As a member of the Chapter and a Trustee of the Order to be responsible for leading the European Province of the Order in following the way of Saint Francis. (*Constitution 3.3.a*)

Accountability

To the Bishop Protector of the Province and to the Provincial Chapter Trustees.

Responsibilities

Maintaining the Vision

- To encourage and support members of the Order in following the principles of the Order

- With the Chapter, to safeguard the Vision of the Order and to plan strategically for the development of the Order and the regular review of its corporate life.
- To ensure that the Order in the Province confronts the actuality of its life with its ideals.
- To oversee the formation and pastoral needs of the province.

Representative

- To maintain links with the Protector General, the Minister General and the Bishop Protector and keep the incumbents apprised of key events, aspirations and problems
- To attend Inter-Provincial Chapter and meetings of Provincial Ministers of the Third Order; to encourage the exchange of ideas, understanding a support between provinces.
- To meet with the Ministers Provincial of the First Order Brothers and Sisters and the Abbess of the Second Order to maintain the unity and common purpose of the Society of Saint Francis.
- To maintain links with the world-wide Franciscan movement
- To encourage ecumenical initiatives on the part of the Order and in particular to liaise with Franciscan orders in other denominations.
- To represent the Third Order to other Religious Orders and to the wider church
- To be a trustee of Franciscan Aid

Administration

- To preside at meetings of the Chapter and to have a casting vote when required.
- To ratify, with Chapter and on advice from Area Teams, Elections to Profession, and the granting of Releases from Vows and of temporary leave of absence. (*statutes 2.4.13: 4.5.2 and Constitution 2.4.a*)
- In co-operation with the Chapter and Area office-holders, to ensure that the organisation for the Province works effectively towards achieving the three aims of the order (*as set out in the Third Order Rule pp 2-4*)
- As Chair of the Trustees, to ensure that the Order meets the requirements of Charity Law.
- To give support to the other members of the Chapter in carrying out their duties.
- In consultation with the Provincial Formation Guardian, to appoint members of Chapter to hear appeals from individual Tertiaries or employees.
- To appoint the Bishop Protector of the Province in consultation with the Ministers Provincial of SSF and CSF and the Abbess of the Second Order in the European Province.

PROVINCIAL FORMATION GUARDIAN (PFG)

Purpose of the Office

As a member of the Provincial Chapter and Trustee of the Order, to further the on-going nurture and growth of all Tertiaries in the Province, novices and professed, towards a greater closeness to the tradition, documents, teaching and spirituality of the Franciscan way; to promote support for those in leadership roles in the Order; and to foster life-long learning in the Order.

Accountability

To be accountable to the Minister Provincial and Provincial Chapter Trustees.

Responsibilities

- To establish a working agreement with the Provincial Novice Guardian, the Minister Provincial and the Provincial Chapter on the development of work.
- To work closely with the Provincial Novice Guardian and the Formation Team, and look to them for support.
- To further the provision and use of adequate formation and development material, written, visual, and other, for use with individuals, Local Groups and Area for the formation of the professed, and the development and formation of the corporate life of the Order.
- To review existing training materials and practices, to adapt and update them, to develop new materials as appropriate. Where appropriate to buy in materials and services and to explore sources of external funding.
- To further training opportunities in the Local Groups, Areas and Clusters.
- To ensure the election in each Area of an Area Formation Guardian.
- To liaise with and support Link Tertiaries and all Area Formation Guardians
- To liaise with the Communications Coordinator and Communications Team on the publication of training materials and training opportunities, especially through TON and Little Portion.
- With the Minister Provincial to ensure that corporate worship is integral to the life of the Province.
- To convene meetings as appropriate of Area Formation Guardians in the Area, Clusters and Provincially as appropriate.
- To produce an Annual Budget for submission to Provincial Chapter, with the Provincial Novice Guardian and Formation Team.
- To chair, alternately with the PNG, Formation Team meetings.
- To deputise for the Minister Provincial when required and requested.

Note. The PFG and PNG work closely together to share responsibilities and complement each other to gain an increased effect from the two post holders working together.

PROVINCIAL NOVICE GUARDIAN (PNG)

Purpose of Office

As a member of the Provincial Chapter and Trustee of the Order, to further the ongoing nurture and growth of all Postulants and Novice Tertiaries in the Province, towards a greater closeness to the tradition, documents, teaching and spirituality of the Franciscan Way. To foster a foundation for life-long learning in the Order.

Accountability

The Provincial Novice Guardian is accountable to the Minister Provincial and Provincial Chapter.

Responsibilities.

- To establish a working agreement with the Provincial Formation Guardian and the Minister Provincial on the development of work.
- To work closely with the Provincial Formation Guardian and the Formation Team and look to them for support.
- To further the provision and use of adequate formation and development material, written, visual, and other, for use with individuals, Local Groups and Area Teams for the formation of Postulants and Novices.
- To review existing training materials, resources and practices, to adapt and update them, to develop new materials and resources as appropriate.
- To further training opportunities in the Local Groups, Areas and Clusters.
- To ensure the appointment in each Area of an Area Novice Guardian.
- To liaise with and support Link Tertiaries and all Area Novice Guardians.
- To liaise with the Communications Coordinator on the publication of training materials and training opportunities.
- To convene meetings as appropriate of Area Novice Guardians in the Area, Clusters, and Province as appropriate.
- To produce an Annual PNG Budget for submission to Provincial Chapter, through the Treasurer.
- To chair, alternately with the PFG, Formation Team meetings.

Note. The PFG and PNG work closely together to share responsibilities and complement each other to gain an increased effect from the two post holders working together.

LINK TERTIARY (LT)

Purpose of the Office

As a member of the Chapter and a Trustee of the Order, to provide a personal link between Tertiaries in an agreed cluster of Areas and the Provincial Chapter.

Accountability

To the Area Ministers, Minister Provincial and to the Provincial Chapter Trustees.

Responsibilities

- To act as a member of the Chapter and Trustee of the Order, attending meetings of the Chapter regularly.
- To communicate personally the vision, decisions and proposals of Chapter to the Area Ministers whom he/she represents.
- To share with the Chapter ideas, examples of good practice and matters of concern from the Areas represented.
- To exercise a ministry of encouragement in their Areas and support Area Ministers in their responsibilities to implement the constitution, statutes and formal decisions of the Chapter.
- When invited to do so, to assist Area Ministers in resolving any difficulty within their Areas.
- To refer to the Chapter any proposals for changing the Cluster of Areas which he/she represents.

PROVINCIAL SECRETARY (PS)

Purpose of the Office

To be the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis European Province point of contact with the Charity Commission in respect of Charity Number 1064356. As a member of Provincial Chapter and a Trustee of the Order, to obtain or provide legal and professional advice to the European Province at all levels if and when required. To be the lead officer for Data Protection issues. Legal experience is helpful – but not essential.

Accountability

To the Minister Provincial and Provincial Chapter Trustees.

Responsibilities

- To act as a member of the Provincial Chapter and Trustee of the Order, attending meetings of the Chapter regularly.
- To provide in advance a report for each Provincial Chapter and to share with the Chapter ideas, examples of good practice and matters of concern.
- To collate, at each Provincial Chapter, the names of those seeking profession or release from vows, to ensure that the names are checked against central records and to ensure that the agreed list is communicated as a formal Chapter decision to the area teams by the Link Tertiaries.
- With the Minister Provincial, to establish the Chapter agenda and programme, and ensure circulation of reports to all Trustees before the meeting.
- To act as administrator for the Provincial Chapter meetings and as the liaison officer to the accommodation and food providers and to locate Chapter meetings as requested by the Trustees.
- To take minutes at Chapter meetings should it be necessary.
- In conjunction with the Minister Provincial to check draft minutes before dissemination, and to ensure that all Chapter members receive the minutes within two weeks of the Chapter meeting.
- To monitor all personnel approved by Chapter to be in receipt of honoraria.
- To act as Returning Officer for all Link Tertiary and Provincial Chapter officer elections. This task may be delegated to another professed Tertiary who need not be a member of Chapter

PROVINCIAL TREASURER (PT)

Purpose of the Office

As a member of the Chapter and a Trustee of the Province to be responsible for the Finances of the European Province and for any other funds set up by the Chapter on behalf of the Province; and to account for these yearly to the membership in the form required by Charity Law.

Accountability

To the Minister Provincial and Provincial Chapter

Responsibilities

- In conjunction with the Independent Examiners, to regularly review systems and procedures for safeguarding the finances of the Province in the context of the Order's purposes and Trust Deed, reporting these to Chapter and making recommendations as appropriate.
- To obtain the authority of Chapter for the appointment of signatories to the Province's bank accounts, including the number of signatories required for different amounts and to inform the Province's bankers accordingly.
- To prepare an annual budget and to submit this to Chapter for approval.
- To report to the Chapter by quarterly management accounts on the actual income and expenditure against budget during the course of the year.
- To conduct all dealings with the Province's bankers and to transfer funds between current and deposit accounts when appropriate.
- To make payments by Internet Banking (occasionally by cheque) due from Provincial funds including expenses of Office Holders, allowances to Areas and other expenditure authorized by the Chapter (excluding monies administered by Area Treasurers).
- To keep the accounts of the Province and to enable the Independent Examiners to prepare the annual account and report, through the Trustees, on the activities of the Order for presentation to the Charity Commission at the end of the financial year on 31st May.
- To supply funds to Area Treasurers for Area expenses keeping them informed of any changes in accounting procedures, being readily available to offer advice and support if needed at year end, and of the need for an account of income and expenditure in their Area for inclusion in the main account.
- To supervise the arrangements for administering the Gift Aid Scheme.
- To inform Area Ministers and Formation Guardians each year of Tertiaries in their area who have paid no contribution, without explanation.
- To facilitate the work of Office Holders, where possible, and make prompt reimbursements on claims submitted.
- To be a member of the Communications Team and present a breakdown of the Publications Budget.
- To be a signatory to the Central Fund Account and liaise with the Secretary of the Fund.

PROVINCIAL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR (PCC)

Purpose of the Office

As a member of Chapter and a Trustee of the Order, the Provincial Communications Coordinator is responsible, on behalf of Provincial Chapter, for overseeing and promoting effective communications within the European Province. The principal function of this role is to work closely with members of the TSSF Communications Team, to represent the Team at Chapter and, with the Team, to maintain the supply, quality, relevance and cost-effectiveness of all TSSF print and electronic communications.

Accountability

To the Minister Provincial and Provincial Chapter Trustees.

Responsibilities

- To organise and chair 3 meetings of the Communications Team per year, and report back to every Chapter meeting for further discussion and final decision making as appropriate. (Permanent members of this team are the Editors of the Little Portion and TON, the Membership Secretary, the Provincial Treasurer and representative from TO Distribution, the Provincial Disability Team and the Web Team.)
- To review the forward publishing programme with the Editor of the Little Portion and the Editorial Team. To coordinate arrangements for the publication of two issues of the Little Portion per year (Summer & Winter).
- To arrange for the timely production and distribution of Little Portion and other TSSF publications and to arrange with the Membership Secretary for mailing labels to be supplied.
- To provide the editor of TON with information from Chapter to be published in the next issue, including new professions and, once a year, RIPs; and to review the final draft of each issue before it is electronically distributed to the membership.
- To review and discuss with the Web Team additions/amendments to the website and with the help of other experienced Tertiaries to seek to ensure that material accepted for the website is of a high standard.
- To work with the Provincial Disability Team to ensure [alternative formats](#) are made available for Tertiaries who require them.
- To check stock levels of TSSF publications with TO Distribution, make revisions and order reprints as required.
- To monitor costs against budgeted expenditure with the Provincial Treasurer.
- To liaise with the First Order and with the editorial board of '*franciscan*', directly or through a nominated Communications Team member.
- Through ideas generated by the Communications Team to introduce initiatives for enhancing effective communications to ensure that Tertiaries are well informed on topical issues as well as on matters of particular concern to members of the Order.
- To liaise with the various groups and sub-committees within the Order to ensure the appropriateness and relevance of published material and to facilitate the effective communication of their published papers, newsletters and other material.
- To receive copies of updates to membership records and to contribute to discussions about access to these with the Membership Secretary and the Provincial Secretary.

PROVINCIAL MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (PMS)

Purpose of the Office

To keep the core records of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1999, and within the policy advised by the Provincial Secretary.

Accountability

To the Minister Provincial, Chapter and the Provincial Secretary.

Conditions of Employment

The nominated post holder is confirmed by Provincial Chapter, once they have accepted the role, which is entirely voluntary and carries no employment responsibility in law. They will normally remain in post for a period of about 6 years and receive an honorarium. All expenses associated with the work (such as stationary, postage etc.) will be reimbursed. The post holder is a full member of the Communications Team and relies on the Provincial Communications Coordinator for day to day support and advice.

Responsibilities

- To ensure the TSSF core records are:
 - Fairly and lawfully processed
 - Processed for limited purposes
 - Adequate, relevant and not excessive
 - Accurate and up to date.
 - Processed in line with the members rights
 - Secure
 - Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection.
- To update the membership database with details of new Novices, following their 'novicing', and assign an ID number.
- To notify the Provincial Treasurer of newly allocated ID numbers for the purpose of financial transactions.
- Update member details when notified of changes via the Provincial Secretary, Provincial Treasurer or Area Teams.
- Provide analysis and information to Chapter members on request.
- Issue area membership lists to respective Areas for verification of changes in January and February of each year, as directed by the Provincial Secretary, and make necessary amendments to the database.
- Supply labels for mailings by Third Order distribution whenever needed.
- Provide an updated database quarterly to the Minister Provincial, Provincial Secretary, Provincial Treasurer and Provincial Communications Coordinator.

Skills

- A good knowledge of Microsoft Excel is required.
- Knowledge of 'mail merge' and label runs is desirable.
- A good eye for detail is helpful.
- Patience, tenacity and a sense of humour will be a great help.

BISHOP PROTECTOR of the European Province of the Third Order (BP)

1. To be appointed by the Provincial Chapter, in conjunction with the 1st and 2nd Orders of SSF, for an initial term of six years, renewable at the discretion of that Chapter. (*See Statute 3.2.8 -TSSF Europe- and Constitution 3.2 -TSSF worldwide. The Constitution of SSF -all 3 orders- has nothing except about the Protector General who is elected by the Bishops Protector of each Province from among their number.*)
2. To represent the Order in the wider councils of the Church. [Note: *SSF, like other religious orders, although an independent body with its own rules and constitutions still has to function within the structures of the Anglican Communion as a whole, and in the particular area in which it is placed. The Church of England Advisory Council on the Relations of Bishops and Religious Communities (usually called The Advisory Council), which includes several bishops and elected representatives of religious communities, plus some co-opted members of newer communities, provides a framework to regulate Anglican religious communities in the area of its jurisdiction within which the Protector's ministry is conducted.*
3. To guard the nature and Rule of the Third Order within the Society of Saint Francis and the Anglican Communion. (Note: *One way to interpret the meaning of the Bishop Protector is that he protects SSF from the Church, protects the Church from SSF, and protects the brothers and sisters from themselves. The Protector also acts as a sensitive conscience of the Society. There is a history of religious orders who self-destruct, for a wide range of reasons. Protectors who make themselves deeply aware of the Society, its documented rules and its dynamic, who grow in understanding of its personnel, and who know something of its strengths and weaknesses, can arbitrate, encourage, caution and if necessary rebuke, while retaining sufficient 'distance'. In all this the relationship of trust between the Protector, Minister and Chapter is crucial.*)
4. To support and encourage the development of its vision according to the Rule of the Order. The Minister Provincial is to keep the Bishop Protector informed of the life of the province.
5. To admit each new Minister Provincial and conduct a Blessing of Ministry.
6. To offer advice and pastoral care to the Minister Provincial and the members of Provincial Chapter; and to any professed Tertiary when necessary and upon reasonable request to the Minister Provincial.
7. To act as a facilitator for the Provincial Chapter, or a returning officer for a postal vote, when requested by the Provincial Chapter. (*See also Constitution 1.3f on the election of the Minister General of TSSF worldwide*).
8. To keep a discerning eye on the Anglican nature and balance of Provincial Chapter and the Order within the European Province, in accordance with agreed criteria established by Chapter. Where nominations are received for election to the Provincial Chapter names shall be referred to him for ratification, with appropriate supporting information.
9. Application for membership of the Order from communicant members of churches not in communion with the See of Canterbury may be referred to

him, and his discretion shall be exercised in accordance with the Constitution of the Society of Saint Francis.

10. To visit a meeting of the Provincial Chapter from time to time, and to address it, and to be invited to any meeting of a Provincial General Chapter.
11. To assist in arbitration in 'Complaints and Appeals in TSSF' when invited to do so by Provincial Chapter.
12. To be a Trustee of the Central Fund of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis.

FURTHER NOTES

The phrase in 8, "in accordance with agreed criteria established by Chapter" led to the following proposal agreed at Chapter (June 2013):

Recognizing a) that the Society of Saint Francis is an Anglican Order with an inclusive policy regarding its membership; b) that our place within the Anglican Communion is monitored and given legitimacy by the Anglican Religious Communities Council; and c) that Bishop Protectors/Episcopal Visitors are "Guardians of the Constitutions of the community and guarantors to the Church at large of the community's sound administration, stability and right to confidence" (A Handbook to the Religious Life 2004) ; we ask that our Bishop Protector uses his episcopal experience and wisdom to discern the character of the development of the Order and to advise the Provincial Chapter as and when he feels called to do so."

The Constitution (worldwide) says (2.1a and 2.1b):

2.1a Tertiaries of the Society of Saint Francis will normally be communicant members of the Anglican Communion or of churches in communion with the See of Canterbury.

2.1b Application for membership from communicant members of other churches may be referred to the Bishop Protector of the Province concerned, who shall exercise his discretion in accordance with the Constitution of the Society of Saint Francis.

Chapter Minute 2.4 of June 2011 (Non-Anglican Review) says that "Chapter unanimously accepted the Review group's Report and recommendations:

- a) Any professed Tertiary may hold Office in the European Province.
- b) In the case of Chapter members (Trustees of the Charity) all names nominated, together with the denomination of each and their election address, shall be sent to the Bishop Protector for ratification. This is an extension of current practice.
- c) Further thought be given to the material used in initial formation for Postulants and Novices so that the ethos, values and discipline of the Order within the Anglican Communion be clearly stated and understood."

Appendix ii. Teams - Terms of Reference

FORMATION TEAM

Purpose:

To provide a support group and reference point for the PFG and PNG
To discuss and action initiatives requested by Chapter
To overview formation (novices and professed) across TSSF
To bring key formation issues to the attention of Chapter

Membership:

- Provincial Formation Guardian (joint convenor, ex officio)
- Provincial Novice Guardian (joint convenor, ex officio)
- A Link Tertiary (appointed by Chapter)
- A representative appointed by the Study & Prayer Network Enabling Group
- A serving Area Minister (appointed by the PFG and PNG)
- A serving Area Formation Guardian (appointed by the PFG and PNG)
- A serving Novice Guardian (appointed by the PFG and PNG)

Appointments:

- Any changes in membership will be reported to Chapter.

Working arrangements:

- The Group may invite additional individuals with relevant expertise to advise on specific issues in person or by correspondence.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Purpose:

To coordinate the work of holders of Provincial appointments who do the work described in the role description of the Provincial Communications Coordinator, (PCC) who represents the Team on Chapter.

Membership:

- Provincial Communications Coordinator (convenor, ex officio)
- Membership Secretary (ex officio)
- Editor of Little Portion
- Editor of TON
- Provincial Treasurer (ex officio)
- Third Order Distribution Team representative
- Web Team representative (or Webmaster)
- Disability Team representative (or Disability Advisor)(PDA)

Appointments:

- By agreement of Chapter, normally on the recommendation of the PCC.

Working arrangements:

- Normally meet three times a year, 5-6 weeks before Chapter
- Report of the meeting is available to Chapter and informs the report to Chapter which the PCC presents at Chapter.
- Discusses communications issues at any time, normally by email.

Circulation: Chapter Members, Team Members; individuals upon request. June 2014

Appendix iii. Chapter Induction Process



Induction Process... Franciscan Style!

- ❖ Become familiar with the Chapter Handbook which accompanies this.
- ❖ Take the opportunity to meet with your predecessor before/at your first Chapter Meeting. It is an opportunity to pass on some of the 'shared memory' of the Order. This 'handing over' Chapter meeting will provide the opportunity to affirm the work that has been done by your predecessor as well as welcome you into your new role.
- ❖ You will be assigned a 'brother' or 'sister' Officer to 'be alongside' you during your first year of Chapter. He/she will be in their third (or more) year and will be able to answer any queries you have as well as provide pastoral support.
- Try to attend all meetings of Chapter. Link Tertiaries also meet for an additional 24 hours prior to Chapter, and this occurs once a year. All expenses for travel and accommodation in respect of your role go to the Provincial Treasurer who will reimburse you.
- Perhaps most of all, maintain your Franciscan **humility** as you take on your responsibility as Officer/LT and Trustee, find Franciscan **joy** in all that you do on behalf of the wider Order, and bring Franciscan **love** into the relationships you make with your fellow Chapter members.



Appendix iv. Funding Requests

Over the past few years or so, it has become apparent that there has been some lack of guidance on spending authorisations within the Order. In light of this, and as a registered charity, there is clearly a need for a mechanism whereby Third Order Chapter can ensure that our financial procedures are both transparent and in line with corporate best practice.

It is therefore proposed that all unplanned funding must be requested through the Provincial Treasurer. The Provincial Treasurer will then consider the request based on the Principles of the Third Order, as declared to the Charity Commission, as well as the availability of disposable income at the time, and assess the longer-term implications of such expenditure. The Treasurer will subsequently advise Chapter of such unplanned commitments, and the judgement he/she has taken on the request. Where an issue of funding request involves a departure from established policy, or a new and significant venture, the Provincial Treasurer shall take such an issue to the Minister (or Deputy Minister) Provincial and the Provincial Secretary, in their capacity as TSSF Charitable Trust 'Responsible Persons', for their approval.

Please kindly complete the form below if you would like Chapter to consider additional expenditure for any purpose.

REQUEST FOR FUNDING

Purpose and Nature of Request: _____

Amount (quoted or estimated) _____

Date needed: _____

Your Name: _____

Position in the Order: _____

Date of Request: _____

Your Contact details: _____

Kindly return this form to the Provincial Treasurer to submit to Chapter for authorization:

Current Provincial Treasurer's Address and contact details will go here

For the Provincial Treasurer

Date request received: _____

Date request submitted to Chapter for approval: _____

Funding approved: Y/N

Circulation: Chapter Members, Team/Network Convenors; individuals upon request. June 2014

Appendix v. Guidelines for inclusion

Mobility (checklist where applicable and where possible)

- Wheelchair accessible transportation.
- Allocated blue-badge parking.
- Level access to all meeting rooms / restrooms.
- Adapted en-suite accommodation.

Hearing (checklist where applicable and where possible)

- Advance copies of papers in a suitable format.
- Fitted or portable hearing loop, microphones.
- A quiet place for social conversation for people who are hard of hearing away from the main group or meeting.

Vision

TSSF's aim is that all documents circulated on paper or by email, or available on the web, should be offered in accessible formats whenever requested.

There are a number of ways to produce information in a format which can be accessed by people who are not able to read standard printed or electronic documents. Many of these formats are considered specialist by people who do not know or work in this area, but it is important to remember that to the individuals concerned their preferred reading format will be very important, and frequently will hold the key to living an independent life.

What formats do I need to produce?

A simple question like "What is your preferred reading format?" can save a large amount of time and money, and is likely to be appreciated by the individual concerned. But also offer larger print, Audio CD, electronic (PDF format) or Braille if this is the preferred choice.

Alternative formats

- Large print – use a Sans Serif font (e.g. Arial or Verdana, not Calibri as it lacks contrast); a minimum of 12 point (14pt may mean special large print copies are less often required; be prepared to go to 18pt); a single column, aligned to the left (ragged right margin); black text on a white or cream background; paper which is matt or matt sheen; if more than 8 pages bind for ease of turning pages, printed on one side of paper only.
- Audio CD – Ensure there is a title, the length of the whole CD and individual tracks which are indicated as short passages.
- Other audio formats may be helpful, e.g. files (such as mp3 format) for computer, iPod and similar devices. Audio tapes also have their uses.
- Braille - This is used infrequently as modern electronic systems have been developed. But if Braille is requested ensure the recipient tells you their preferred layout; square or A4 pages, single or both sides, following the basic document layout or a rolling style.
- Electronic – recipients will have their own programs installed depending on their need or ability so send to them in a basic format. Use email and attachments in PDF format unless told otherwise!
- If there are people for whom English is not the first language, the use of Google Translate may be helpful.

Use of email

Keep it simple is the obvious first step. Naming attachments helpfully is also worth considering. Shortened and abbreviated filenames are unlikely to be read in a meaningful way by screen reader software. For example

- The filename 'LPissue4' is not as meaningful as 'Little Portion Issue 4'.
- Without capitals 'littleportionissue4' will be read as one unintelligible word by screen reader software, and is challenging to read by sight.
- 'LittlePortionIssue4' will be read as separate words and a number by most screen reader software.

In fact helpful file naming is appreciated by fully sighted people too. More information is available at an [Office for Disability Issues \(of the UK Government\) web page](#).

Web page design

The same principles as for print apply. Other ideas may be found at, for example, the [Office for Disability Issues \(of the UK Government\)](#).

What is Clear Print?

Clear Print is RNIB's print design guidelines for all types of documents. The guidelines have been specially created to enable everyday information to be immediately accessed by more people.

Top tips for achieving Clear Print:

- Document text size should be 12-14 pt, preferably 14 pt.
- The font you choose should be clear, avoiding anything stylised
- All body text should be left aligned
- Use bold sparingly, only highlight a few words rather than a paragraph
- Keep the text layout clear, simple and consistent
- Don't use blocks of capitals and try not to use any italics or underlining
- Text should not be overlaid on images
- The contrast between the text and background is as high as possible
- All text should be the same orientation on the page
- Space between columns of text is large enough to be distinct

Some other useful links to information:

- [CNIB Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines](#)
- [The Office for Disability Issues: A guide to accessible publishing](#)
- [The Bodleian Library](#)