

# SMA Secretaries



2.30pm, 10 janvier / 10 January 2023

by Zoom

# Secretariat and data

# SMA Permanent Oath

Introduce myself - Proverbs 19:21 - *Man proposes, but God disposes*

How I ended up in SMA, 42.5 years with **only 5 in Africa**, rest in admin type works – vocations [6], fundraising (Development Office, Magazine, Communication Director) [12] and Secretary (Rome and Cork) [21]. *Overlapping appointments, at present with three and a half appts.!*  
I don't have a second chair in my office – Pat Kelly accused me of being unsociable – my reply: “my office is where I work not where I chat.”  
9 – 12 years service as Secretary – keeping the #memory' of the Councils [MAfr decision re Formation House in Europe]

**I shall accept the tasks entrusted to me by my Superiors.**

*Article 39, SMA Constitutions & Laws*

**J'accepterai les tâches qui me seront confiées par mes supérieurs.**

*Article 39, Constitutions et Lois SMA*

**The Unit Secretariat is a permanent agency of communication for the entire unit, and, in some cases the wider Society.**

*Cf. Article 79, SMA Constitutions & Laws*

**Le secrétariat de l'entité est un organe permanent de communication pour l'ensemble de l'entité et, dans certains cas, pour la société dans son ensemble.**

*Cf. Article 97, Constitutions et Lois SMA*

Importance of circulating approved information regularly – Regular Unit Newsletters, Emails, WhatsApp group etc.

[e.g. bereavements etc. – GDPR – check first with confrere if he wants his details published in the notice]

Lack of information allows for gossip and confreres to think they are being kept in the dark about things. Keep members up to date. If personal information about someone ask their permission first.

## 1 Confidentiality – essential

Once you tell one other person something it is no longer a secret, even your best friend. You would not want someone telling others of your issues or difficulties etc., so you should not do same to them. When I get leading questions from confreres about someone I just stay silent or say I know nothing about it. I don't say anything further.

## 2 Relationship with Unit Superior – professional and personal

Keep him updated on any news you hear. What he does with it is his concern. Don't 'hang him out to dry'! Introducing people to him. You should not be the spokesperson for the Unit as you may not know all the facts of a particular situation. Unit Leader is.

## 3 Unit Superior and Vice Superior are Major Superiors; Councillors are not.

Unit should have a policy on what access Council members [and others] have to the Secretariat / files / documents etc. Secretariat should always be locked behind you when you leave it. If someone is in there when you're ready to leave either they leave too or you wait for them to leave [exception is Superior and Vice Superior]

## 4 Mail

### Distribution of mail to Leadership Council

1 Opening of mail – Private and Confidential [only opened by the addressee]. Different Superiors may want you to open ALL their mail in their absence but it is better that the Vice Superior does so and then he can give you what letters you can deal with before the Superior returns. And if not sure what to do with such a letter, contact Superior by WhatsApp or phone to ask for direction, even if it is only to acknowledge the letter and say that the Superior will deal with it on his return. We don't have to work to other people's timetables or Agendas.

2 Who opens mail in absence of Superior / Vice Superior?

3 Mail trays for each member of the Unit administration – Council, Secretary, Bursar, Archivist etc.

4 Recording same: incoming and outgoing, stamping copies should indicate date/to or from whom/reference

5 Follow up - protocol

6 Mailing lists – both for post and email. Use BCC for mailing to all members in a group. NOT CC

## 5 General Council Minutes

Taking Minutes – different ways

GDPR

Correcting Minutes

Approving Minutes – signatures

## 6 Appointment letters – official signatures

- 7            GDPR – Data Protection policy [2018]
- 8            Records – confreres details – for SMA and wider Church            [Ordination] purposes.  
Don't wait until just before Permanent Oath for certificates [Birth, Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation, official photo]  
LIST OF APPOINTMENTS [Excel]  
Name, Appointed to, Position, date of original appt, how many years, when it next expires, year of expiry [helps with sorting them]  
LIST OF ALL CONFRERES [Excel]  
1    Name, Title, Date of Birth, Age, Month of Birth, Date of Ordination, Email and phone details, Status (in service of SMA  
[Formation, Promotion, Vocations...], in a diocesan parish, seconded to other Unit etc.)  
2    Full name and postal address  
3    Full name and email address
- 9            Backup of information – external hard drive / iCloud ?  
Password protected [8-12 characters]. Who has access?
- 10           Unit Statistics – purpose? Generalate Budgets etc.  
Pie charts are great to see info visually
- 11           Protocols for different matters  
Funerals of confreres immediate family [parents and siblings, others], Ordinations, Oath ceremonies, Christmas post, letters of condolence etc.

# You can never have enough files and subfolders.

## Kavanagh Martin

Biodata

Photos

Education

Appointments

Letters / Articles [by / about]

Reports

- Formation [from Formators, ISY, Stage ...]

- Other [visitation by Unit Leadership etc.]

See next three slides – going from Documents to SMA Ireland to SMA Members

- **Secretariat equipment**

Locked Filing Cabinets

Register of Post – in / out – date received / sent, to whom, by whom, subject [general] [keep GDPR in mind]

Stapler / staples – especially a long-armed one (to staple A3 sheets)

Files – lots of, and different types (envelope type as well as plastic). Label each file indicating what's inside

Pens – black, blue and red + Fountain pen (for signing official letters and docs, e.g. Minutes)

Photocopier / scanner

Block writing pads for taking Minutes etc. (keep them afterwards for checking back)

Paper clips

Shredder

Code of Canon Law and a Commentary

SMA Constitutions & Laws

GA Assembly texts / Unit Assembly texts

Unit Assembly documents and other official publications of the Unit (e.g. État – keep one updated every three months but not published, see pie chart behind my back)

Stamp – for official letters;

Stamp – for all texts etc. kept in the Secretariat. Don't 'loan' them out... more often than not, they will not come back!

- **Safeguarding** – avoid anything in this area.
- **Wall Calendar of events throughout the year** - annual events, ordination dates etc.
- **Handover Notes** – start making them from **Day 1** of taking over.