

Keeping People Informed

Given the possible complexity of situations, it is important that the family, undertaker or stonemason are totally clear on the level of fees, how they are calculated and when they are payable. Parishes are therefore encouraged by 1st January each year to produce an information sheet listing (1) the relevant "official" and (2) the locally determined discretionary fees. This provides clarity and minimises the possibility of mistake. If you charge discretionary fees and deal regularly with particular undertakers and stonemasons, it would be helpful to let them have a copy of this information sheet annually.

What happens to Assigned Fees?

They are used by the DBF to assist in funding the stipends of clergy. This is why it is so important that the DBF receives assigned fees as soon as possible (each quarter would be a reasonable frequency). In 2009 assigned fees amount in total to over £500,000, 6% of the total income of the DBF. This funds the equivalent of 14 full time paid clergy posts.

Further Questions?

In the first instance you should contact the Diocesan Finance Office, particularly if accounting or payment issues are concerned. Alternatively the relevant Archdeacon is also a point for help.

What happens if there is no Vicar?

Fees should be charged and collected by the PCC as normal. The element of fees which normally go to the incumbent or the DBF should be retained by the Churchwardens/PCC and any costs of visiting clergy are paid out of this money. Any clergy fees remaining are passed to the DBF upon the appointment of a new priest. The Treasurer usually administers this on behalf of the Churchwardens. The Archdeacon will give advice at the appropriate time.

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A Guide to Parochial Fees

A short introduction to accounting for wedding, funeral and other parochial fees, designed for PCC treasurers.

2009 Edition

Introduction

Each year, the Archbishops' Council sets the level of parochial fees which must be charged by PCCs. These can be found on the Church of England website at the following address:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/fees/>.

Fees are not charged for baptisms, but a fee is payable if a formal certificate of baptism is provided. The level of these fees is revised with effect from 1st January each year. These are the main fees applicable for 2009 (£):

Marriages	PCC	TOTAL
Banns Publication	7.00	22.00
Banns Certificate	0.00	12.00
Marriage service	131.00	254.00

Baptisms	PCC	TOTAL
Certificate of baptism	0.00	12.00

Funerals	PCC	TOTAL
Funeral service	45.00	99.00
Burial after service	190.00	190.00
Burial at other time	190.00	226.00
Burial certificate	0.00	12.00

Monuments	PCC	TOTAL
Charges vary from	12.00	21.00
To	101.00	152.00

Entitlement to Fees

The fee tables produced by the Archbishops' Council split the entitlement to fees between the incumbent (ie Clergy person or Vicar) and the PCC. The incumbent's portion should be paid either:

- To the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) if the fees have been "Assigned" by the incumbent; or
- To the incumbent if the fees have not been "Assigned".

Charges by PCCs for items provided beyond the official fee tables are at the discretion of the PCC and the rates of these should be formally agreed by the PCC in time for use from the next 1st January. The discretionary fees will cover matters such as charges for bell ringing, the choir, music, flowers and so on. These will vary from parish to parish. Both the discretionary fees and any associated costs are accounted for within unrestricted funds.

Who pays the Fees

Wedding fees are paid by the couple applying to get married.

In the case of funerals, the fees are normally paid by the undertaker concerned.

Fees for monuments are paid by the stonemason who requests permission either to erect a monument or to add an inscription to an existing monument.

Accounting for Fees

If there are a lot of transactions involving fees, it may be convenient for the PCC to have a separate bank account to deal with fee receipts and payments. This is not compulsory, and many PCCs deal with fees totally through their main bank account.

Wherever possible, fees should be received by cheque and be banked immediately. This is not generally a problem as regards funerals and monuments as the undertakers and stonemasons making the payments will wish to pay by cheque anyway. Weddings are more tricky, but families should be encouraged to settle fees by cheque wherever possible. Avoiding cash transactions provides greater security and traceability for both parties.

Fees for official baptism certificates, weddings, and monuments should be collected before the event. This is not possible with funerals, but as most parishes deal with only a handful of undertakers, keeping track of the safe and timely receipt of funeral fees should not be an onerous matter.

The PCC should recognise as unrestricted income only its own entitlement. The incumbent's entitlement must be paid over to the DBF or incumbent, (depending on whether assignment of fees has taken place) on a regular basis.

The Diocesan Finance Office is able to advise whether or not fees have been assigned. Your incumbent, of course, will also know this.