



Notes from the Archdeacon for Churchwardens and PCC's facing an Interregnum

Who's In Charge?

When the vicar leaves, the churchwardens and Area Dean have prime responsibility for the parish. For this purpose they are known as Sequestrators (see below). The lay Vice-chair chairs the PCC and the Area Dean may be invited to attend meetings.

Curates are formally under the direction of the Area Dean. Though not in charge of the parish, they will often be looked to for advice and leadership: close co-operation between all parties is important. Readers similarly come under the oversight of the Area Dean. If they are to continue their ministry during the interregnum, the churchwardens should write to the Bishop seeking his permission.

Requests for the erection of *churchyard memorials* should be referred immediately to the Area Dean, who will apply the Churchyard Regulations.

Organising Visiting Clergy

The Churchwardens, in consultation with the Area Dean, make arrangements for Sunday services, baptisms, marriages and funerals. Some services will almost certainly be cut. Fees and travelling expenses for ministers conducting Sunday services and no more than two week-day services may be reclaimed.

Travelling expenses within the diocese only should be reimbursed for all visiting clergy and visiting Readers at the diocesan rate, currently 40p per mile.

Stipendiary clergy, paid Chaplains, Self-Supporting Ministers and visiting Readers should not be paid fees. Retired clergy and members of religious orders who hold the Bishop's Permission to Officiate may be paid fees authorised by the Bishop. From 1 January 2007 these are:

MAIN SERVICE WITH SERMON (Sung Communion, Matins, Evensong – including Baptism or Said Communion if this follows the main service)	£27.00
SAID COMMUNION OR BAPTISM (on a separate occasion)	£15.00
MARRIAGE	£117.00
FUNERAL IN CHURCH	£51.00
BURIAL IN CHURCHYARD on separate occasion	£33.00
FUNERAL with no service in church (Crem or Cem)	£93.00

See also the notes under 'Sequestrators' (below)

Banns

If necessary, Banns of Marriage may be called by laypeople and the banns register signed by them, but a Certificate of Banns must be signed by the Curate or Area Dean.

Child Protection Policy and Criminal Records Bureau

If any person is to work with children or vulnerable adults for the first time, Churchwardens must contact the Area Dean immediately, who will deal with all the confidential paperwork required.

What about the Parsonage?

A set of *keys* and the intruder alarm code should be sent to the Diocesan Surveyor immediately the house is vacated. All PCC property should be removed.

Where possible, the vicarage or rectory will be let during a vacancy by arrangement with the Archdeacon and Diocesan Surveyor. When that happens the Churchwardens are relieved of any

responsibility for the house. If that is not possible, Churchwardens should check twice weekly to ensure the house is secure inside and out (to satisfy our insurers). The water supply should be turned off at the mains and (from November to April inclusive) the heating system drained by a registered plumber – names can be recommended and reasonable charges paid if you 'phone the Surveyor's office on 0121 426 0409. The garden should be maintained.

Please notify the Surveyor if emergency repairs are needed. Outside office hours, contact the Archdeacon. When a new minister has been appointed s/he will be invited to visit the house with the Surveyor, Archdeacon and Churchwardens to consider possible building works and interior redecoration. The PCC will be asked to help with costs involved. If the PCC has made regular contributions to the Diocesan Decoration Scheme, this will lighten the costs involved.

Appointing a New Minister

The PCC has an influence on the appointment of an Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge. The Archdeacon will ask to meet with the PCC to explain its rights and responsibilities, to give advice about the interregnum and to answer questions.

When the time comes for prospective clergy to visit the parish, the Patron may ask the PCC to pay travelling, subsistence and accommodation expenses.

Sequestrators

This is the title given to Churchwardens and the Area Dean to cover their special responsibilities during an interregnum. It implies the separation of part of the church accounts, under their administration.

They should ask the PCC Treasurer either to open a separate Sequestration Account or to open a new and temporary Receipts and Payments Column in the normal accounts. This account

- (a) *receives* the fees for occasional offices which would normally have formed part of the minister's income and
- (b) *pays* travelling expenses and (where appropriate) fees to visitors.
See 'Organising Visiting Clergy' above for the amounts payable.

At the end of the interregnum, a detailed statement of the Sequestration account should be sent to the Archdeacon. This should list the dates and services taken, by whom they were taken, the fees paid and the travelling expenses claimed at the diocesan rate. It should also list the fees received.

If the Sequestration account is in credit, a cheque for the surplus, payable to the BDBF, should accompany it. If the account has a debit balance and is approved by the Archdeacon, this sum will be reimbursed out of the diocesan Stipends' Fund. If PCC cashflow is badly affected by payments, accounts may be sent to the Archdeacon quarterly.

Other PCC accounts are handled by the Treasurer as usual.

Other Expenses

Churchwardens, Readers, PCC Secretaries and Treasurers and others may incur additional out of pocket expenses during an interregnum. They may wish to refer these to the PCC, which will not be reimbursing the Minister's expenses during this period.

SOS

Please do not feel you are on your own. The dedicated work of Churchwardens is appreciated and they are prayed for regularly. The Area Dean is the first port of call for Churchwardens, but the Archdeacon is always available to give advice or talk things over. A copy of 'A Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors' by Macmorran & Briden is a mine of useful information.

May God bless you in your continuing work and witness.