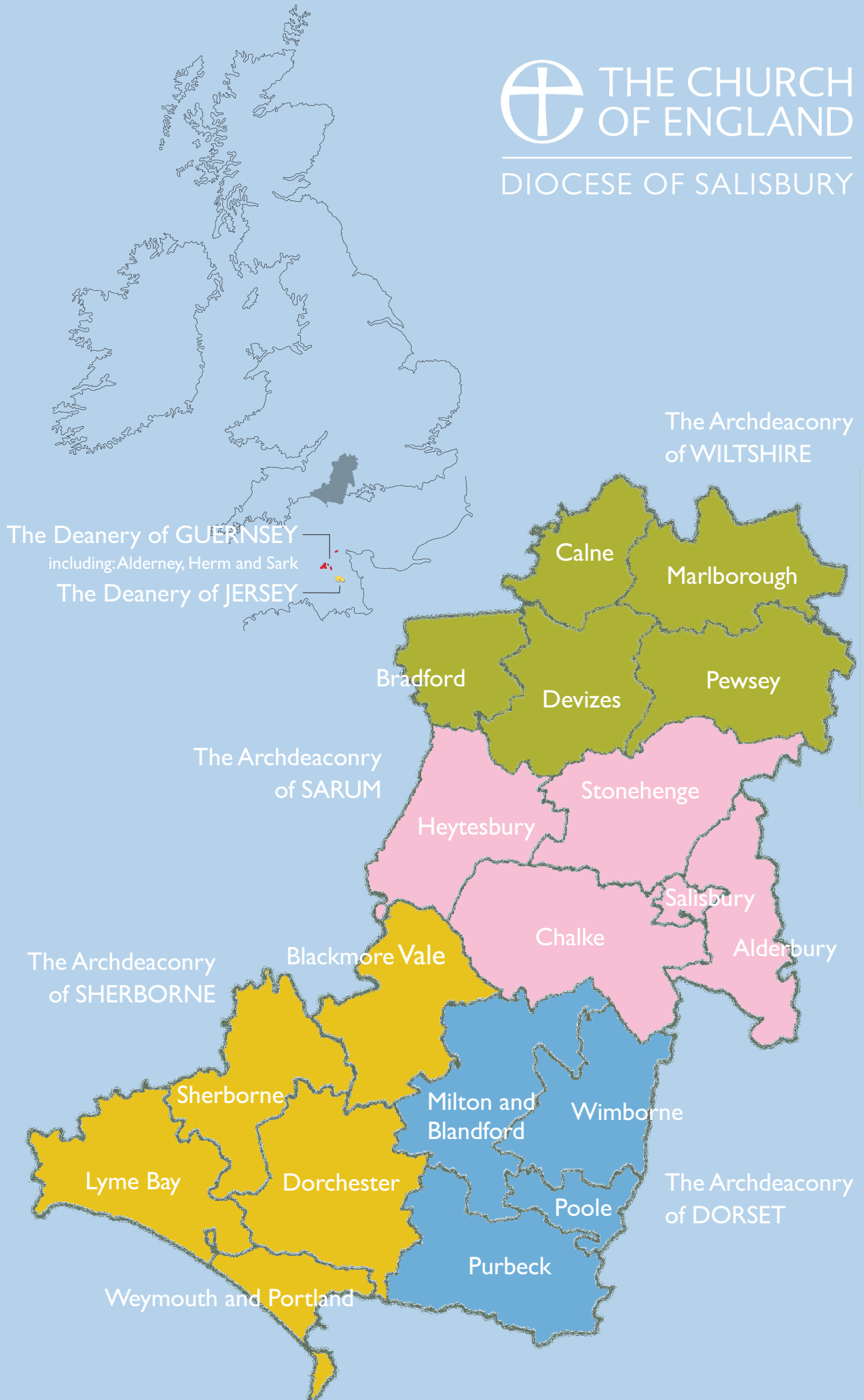


DIOCESE OF SALISBURY  
Clergy Housing Handbook



# Welcome to the Diocese of Salisbury

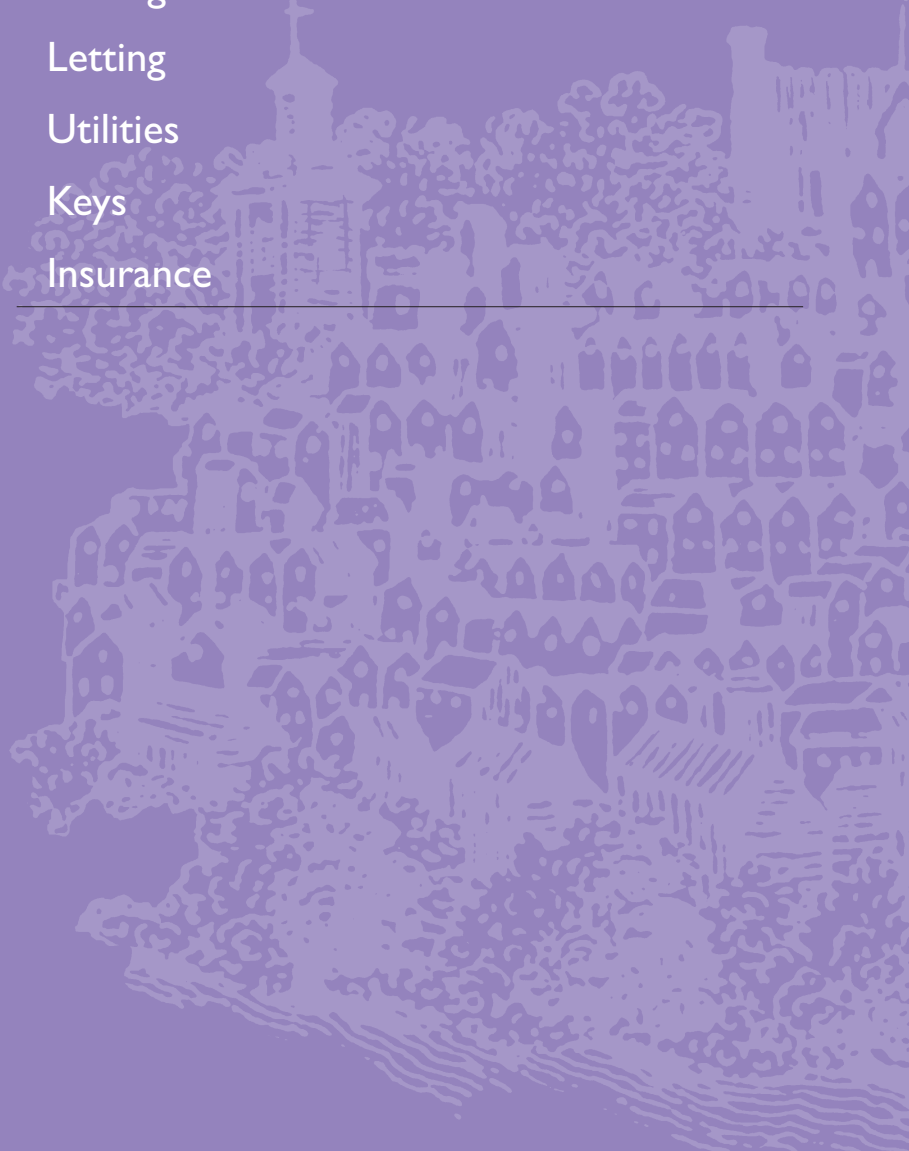
The Diocese of Salisbury is situated in the south of England encompassing large areas of Dorset, and Wiltshire, a small area of Hampshire and Devon and all of the Channel Islands. It has over 240 Diocesan properties located across this diverse area of rural countryside, beautiful coastlines, and urban towns.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance, advice and information to all clergy living in Diocesan property and to set out the roles and responsibilities of clergy and the Property Department.

Housing plays a vital part in the happiness and wellbeing of clergy and their families, and the Diocese will endeavour to provide an efficient, friendly and professional service to enable clergy to undertake their ministry and enjoy living in their homes.

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# Commitment

The Diocese is committed to providing properties that are fit for purpose and provide a stable environment for clergy to carry out their duties.

## Responsibility and Obligations

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The responsibility for maintaining a property is shared between the Diocese and the clergy. Most of the maintenance and repair is undertaken by the Diocesan Property Department who will arrange day-to-day repairs and servicing, and carry out larger maintenance items during quinquennial works; however, there are responsibilities and obligations placed on clergy that are upheld by the principles of the 'Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972'.

These responsibilities apply equally to all clergy (whether incumbents, priests in charge or curates) and place a duty of care on them to take proper care of their property. This therefore requires clergy to undertake or pay for routine maintenance tasks such as cleaning windows, clearing of gutters, internal decorations, sweeping chimneys, garden upkeep and small household repairs.

*The full rights and duties of the clergy and Diocesan Property Department are set out in Regulations 12-14 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009*

In summary the Measure places out the following obligations on clergy:

The priest shall have a duty to take proper care of a parsonage house, being a duty equivalent to that of a tenant to use premises in a tenant-like manner.

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The priest shall notify the Diocesan Board of Finance through its Property Department, of any repairs to a parsonage house appearing to be necessary, and in the case of repairs urgently required for reasons of safety or to prevent further damage or deterioration, or to meet a liability to other persons, and shall do so without delay.

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The priest shall have a duty to keep the Property Department informed of matters affecting buildings and land belonging to the benefice, such as planning applications on neighbouring property.

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## Diocesan Property Department

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The Diocesan Property Department is responsible for all day-to-day reactive maintenance and servicing works (apart from those included in clergy responsibilities) and all emergency call out works.

The department is also responsible for all strategic and planned maintenance and servicing works which include:

Quinquennial Works

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Ingoing Works

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Empty Property Works

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Planned Improvements and Alterations

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*A full list and explanation of these different areas of work and procedures is detailed in the **A-Z of Clergy Property Matters** on page 7*



## Contacts

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To report an issue with your property please email or telephone the department on:

Email

**property.dept@salisbury.anglican.org**

Telephone

**01722 411933**

Once through to the property administrator they will transfer you to the correct member of staff to deal with your issue.

**Office hours are 9.00am to 5.00pm, Mondays to Fridays.**

There is a dedicated telephone answering machine to make it easier for you to report any problems you may have with the property and to ask for advice and assistance. An initial response will normally be sent within two working days. Contacts within the department are as follows:

### **Diocesan Surveyor**

Shawn Donnelly BSc MRICS

Email

**shawn.donnelly@salisbury.anglican.org**

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### **Procurement and Property Asset Manager**

Simon Ferris BSc LLB MRICS

Email

**simon.ferris@salisbury.anglican.org**

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### **Repairs Co-ordinator and Site Manager**

Tracy Bowes

Email

**tracy.bowes@salisbury.anglican.org**

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### **Administrator**

Eileen Spalding

Email

**eileen.spalding@salisbury.anglican.org**



# A-Z Clergy Property Matters

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## Access and Consultation

Clergy will be consulted about any works that are to be undertaken on their property. Normally, the timing and extent of these works will be by agreement. Where work is of urgent/essential nature, clergy will be given notice of when the works are to take place and will be expected to allow access to the Diocesan Surveyor or contractors for this purpose. Reasonable notice will be given wherever possible but in certain cases of emergency immediate access may be required.

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## Alarm Systems and Security

Alarm systems are not normally provided unless the property and its location put the security of the clergy at increased risk. In such cases, appropriate arrangements will be considered and there may be grants made available to help fund the recommended security works. Once an alarm system is installed, the clergy will be responsible both for the annual maintenance fee and any repair costs.

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## Alterations and Improvements

\*See **Decorations** on page 13

The layout and facilities of the dwelling reflect the necessity for safety, ease of maintenance and the longevity of the property. The Diocese recognises that clergy households may want to undertake improvements and they may apply to the Property Department with such proposals. These will then be considered carefully. However, no alterations (other than routine domestic redecoration\*) may be made without written permission of the Property Department because of possible health and safety risks, the soundness of the property and the effect on the property insurance. If any alteration is agreed, the contractor must be approved by the Property Department. If works are carried out without consent, then a household may be required to reinstate unauthorised works at their own expense.

Examples of alterations, that are not permitted without written permission include altering any wiring, changes to kitchen units and layouts, making openings or doorways in walls and altering or adding to the plumbing and heating systems.

The Property Department is working to improve the overall standard of the properties in the portfolio and subject to budget restrictions will look to undertake improvements to properties each year as part of a planned programme of works. Clergy co-operation in enabling these improvement works to happen is greatly valued. Examples of common improvements

carried out include kitchen and bathroom refurbishments, electrical re-wiring, re-piping plumbing and heating systems, and window and door replacement.

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## Annexes

Some properties may have buildings detached from the main dwelling which may be capable of use as storage, study space, meeting rooms or additional accommodation.

Strict planning rules, Building Regulations and Council Tax measures apply to the use of annexes. Therefore, clergy must ensure that written consent has been provided by the Property Department before any change of use of an annex is undertaken (e.g. from storage space to a study).

Any costs associated with upgrading an annex to comply with legislation for a new use may need to be borne by the clergy.

Third party use of an annex is not generally permitted, and written consent from the Property Department must be sought before sharing or letting the space.

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## Asbestos

The asbestos records and surveys for parsonage houses are held by the Property Department to whom all enquiries about it should be addressed. No work should be undertaken in a property by anyone until asbestos records have been checked.

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## Bathrooms

Maintenance of the appliances and fittings to bathrooms as well as the floor coverings, tiling and seals are the responsibility of the Property Department, however the weekly cleaning of these is the responsibility of the clergy. Infrequent cleaning will lead to premature failure requiring expensive replacement.\*

\*See **Condensation** on page 11

The standard colour for all bathroom suites is white and they are only replaced or re-enamelled when they are worn out. Clergy are responsible for the provision and/or replacement of a shower curtain of sufficient length to avoid water draining on to the floor.

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## Bats

Bats are a protected species and there are expensive fines for disturbing them. Clergy should notify the Property Department immediately if they believe that bats are present at their property.

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## Boilers and Central Heating

Central heating is provided in the property as standard and the Property Department is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of the boiler. This service is agreed in consultation with clergy to arrange access and there is a works programme for modernisation of older boilers and heating systems. If clergy have any problems with their boiler between services, they should contact the appointed boiler contractor direct. Clergy are responsible for the costs of the energy that they use.

Some properties have oil fired boilers. Running out of oil can cause damage and will require a call-out to re-start the boiler once a delivery of oil has been made. Should this occur, the costs associated with running out

of oil will be re-charged to the clergy. Electronic or external gauges should not be solely relied on and clergy should carry out visual inspections or better still arrange for regular top-ups. Savings can be made by joining a local oil supply club and the PCC is normally able to advise regarding these.

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## Boundaries

It is very important that the boundaries to the property are properly marked and maintained both for legal reasons and to promote good relations with neighbours. If the clergy know that the boundary is being altered, either decreasing, encroaching on or increasing the size of the plot, they should let the Property Department know immediately.

Walls around the property are maintained by the Property Department and clergy should report any damage or deterioration to them and inform the department if they think there is a risk to their family or the public.

If the property shares an internal party wall with a neighbouring property, then the clergy should inform the Property Department immediately of any concerns they may have about it, for example, if any works on it are undertaken by neighbours then a party wall award agreement may be needed.

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## Burglaries

If clergy are unfortunate enough to have a burglary, the following guidance is given:

Notify the police immediately and obtain a crime reference number.

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Contact the Property Department as soon as possible.

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Contact their own insurance provider in relation to their contents insurance.

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Details of out-of-hours contractors can be found in the Emergency Contacts supplement to this handbook, if clergy need urgent repairs, such as boarding up the property to make it safe and secure until proper repairs can be carried out.

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Discuss with the Property Department whether any improvements should be made to improve security.

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Inform the Churchwardens.

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## Businesses

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The permission of the Archdeacon and the Property Department is required before any business activity can be carried out from a clergy house.

In considering any approach, the Property Department will require written confirmation that:

Clergy have arranged appropriate insurance.

(Note: there is a risk of being financially exposed as a result of an event leading to a claim against the property insurance being rejected by an insurance company.)

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The proposal does not constitute a change of use of any part of the property, (as defined in the Planning Act 2008 and other associated legislation).

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Any alterations required by any regulatory authorities have the prior consent of the Property Department.

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Clergy will meet any non-domestic rates charged by the Local Authority.

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## Carbon Monoxide

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Carbon monoxide detectors are provided as standard and the Property Department is responsible for their replacement and repair. The detectors are checked over every year as part of the boiler service, however it is important that clergy regularly clean and test the detectors to ensure they are working. The most common cause for detectors not working is the need to change the battery which is the responsibility of the clergy. Carbon monoxide detectors should be left in the property when vacating.

## Capital Works

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Capital works to a property are major works that can be carried out and add value to the property. Typical examples are an extension or a major internal alteration that would create an extra bedroom or bathroom for example.

Budget restrictions severely restrict such large scale works. Where major works are thought to be needed, clergy should write to the Property Department detailing their requirements and reasons why they are necessary. The case would be taken to the Archdeaconry Property Committee and then to the Diocesan Finance Committee for approval.

## Carpets and Floor Coverings

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The Diocese are responsible for the carpet floor coverings to all ground floor areas and vinyl flooring for kitchens, utility rooms, bathrooms and cloakrooms. These coverings are sometimes replaced as part of ingoing works if found to be in poor condition. Floor coverings are also replaced at other times during an occupancy due to poor condition; however, if the early deterioration is found to be due to lack of care or is damage caused by pets then the replacement may need to be funded by the clergy.

\*See **Woodblock Flooring** on page 27 if a property has parquet floor or similar

## Chimneys and Flues

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Floor coverings\* to all upper floor areas including the staircase (excluding vinyl floor coverings to bathrooms and cloakrooms) are the responsibility of the clergy and any replacement will need to be funded by them.

If a property has a chimney flue which is in use, it is the responsibility of the clergy to make sure that it is swept annually. If the flue is not in use, it must be properly closed off to prevent damp and debris collecting inside the building. Advice regarding this should be sought from the Property Department.

Bird guards are fitted to many chimney pots. If, however, there are pots without guards and there are issues with bird ingress, the Property Department should be notified to arrange for a guard to be fitted.

## Conservatories

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Any repairs and general maintenance to existing conservatories are the responsibility of the Property Department. The cleaning of conservatories including glass, UPVC and gutters is the responsibility of the clergy.

The Diocese does not provide funding for new conservatories. Where there is one in existence, the Property Department will advise on its condition and maintenance. The Diocese reserves the right to remove and not replace conservatories, if they are deemed uneconomical to repair or replace.

## Condensation Damp and Mould

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Condensation, mould and damp is sometimes due to the way a property is used.

A helpful guide for clergy on how they can mitigate against the build-up of condensation, damp and/or mould in their property can be found in the supplement to this handbook.

Clergy should make every attempt to follow these guidelines, however if they believe there is an underlying issue with the property, they should contact the Property Department.

## Cookers

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The provision of a cooker, whether free-standing or built-in, is the responsibility of the clergy including its cleaning, maintenance and repair. If there is an appliance already in place on arrival it will become the property of the clergy to use, clean, repair and maintain during the occupancy.

If clergy require built-in appliances to be removed in order to fit their own in place, the Property Department will arrange for works to make the standard 600mm space available if this is possible without major disruption and cost. If a larger space is required or major works are required to fit an appliance, then these additional works may need to be funded by the clergy.

The electrical connection of new appliances is the responsibility of the clergy and must be undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor. It is the clergy's responsibility to send the details of the fitting contractor to the Property Department to confirm their competence to undertake the works and to record what is being done for safety purposes. In the event of the

installation being regarded as unsafe when the property inspection takes place, repairs or replacement will be at the clergy's expense.

All gas appliances are checked annually as part of the gas safety inspection checks.

All electrical appliances are checked as part of the five yearly electrical inspection check. There is also a check undertaken on all electrics prior to all new occupancies.

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## Council Tax

The Diocese is responsible for Council Tax payment on behalf of the clergy and this is paid directly by the Property Department. Any correspondence received regarding Council Tax should be sent to the Property Department unanswered.

The Diocese is entitled to a 25% Council Tax discount for any house with a single occupier. Where this discount is lost because clergy takes in a lodger, equivalent reimbursement must be made to the Diocese.

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## Cracks

It is most likely that at times clergy will notice cracks internally and externally in their property. Most hairline cracks, especially if they run in parallel with the walls and ceiling, are due to plaster shrinkage and can be dealt with during the course of redecoration. However, if a crack is larger than hairline and is changing or worsening, it is important that clergy contact the Property Department for advice without delay. A photograph of the crack is particularly helpful and from this the Property Department can then decide on any further action necessary.

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## Curtains • Tracks Blinds and Fixings

The fitting of curtains and blinds is the responsibility of the clergy.

The Diocese provides battens and plastic curtain tracks to window openings. If clergy wish to fit curtain poles, they will need to fund these works themselves.

On departure, items may be left for the next occupant as long as this is agreed with the Property Department beforehand.

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## Day-to-Day Repairs

Day-to-day minor repairs are the responsibility of the Property Department and should therefore be reported as many minor repairs can sometimes indicate a more serious underlying problem.

Sometimes clergy feel they are capable of undertaking minor repairs. This may be possible, however they should discuss these repairs with the Property Department before undertaking any work to ensure that repairs are correctly carried out, that the necessary insurance is not affected and any required health and safety measures are in place.

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## Decking

Installation of decking is not permitted without prior agreement of the Property Department for reasons of safety. Unless decking is carefully maintained and cleaned, it can become slippery and unstable and is costly to remove.

## **Decorations External**

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The Property Department is responsible for external decoration works which are carried out as part of the quinquennial works every five years. In most cases, scaffolding is needed to carry out these decorations in order to comply with health and safety legislation. The Property Department will arrange the timing of this work after consultation with the clergy.

Due to the strict health and safety legislation regarding working at height, households should not attempt to carry out high level external decoration works.

## **Decorations Internal**

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Internal decorations are the responsibility of the clergy and there are decoration grants available to help fund towards these works:

### **Initial Decoration Allowance**

In addition to the resettlement grant available to clergy on moving into a Diocesan-managed house, an initial decorating allowance of £500 may be claimed. The allowance is for the first five years of the appointment and may be claimed at any time during that period (in instalments or a single payment). A claim must be made by sending receipts for paint and materials into the Property Department who will then arrange reimbursement.

### **Decoration of Hall, Stairs and Landing Allowance**

A grant of £500 is available to help clergy with the decoration of this area and funding is only available once every ten years. This grant was brought in to help with the expense of decorating these high-level areas as strict health and safety guidance must be followed. Clergy should not attempt to carry out high level internal decoration works unless previously agreed with the Property Department who will need to check that risk assessments are in place.

A claim must be made by sending receipts for paint, materials and any professional labour used in to the Property Department who will then arrange reimbursement.

### **Annual Decoration Allowance**

During the course of an appointment beyond the first five years, a maximum sum of £85 per annum is available from the Diocese towards internal decorating materials. The allowance must be claimed during the calendar financial year in question. It cannot be carried forward and is for paint and materials only, not labour. A claim must be made by sending receipts for paint and materials into the Property Department who will then arrange reimbursement.

The Diocese encourages clergy in their responsibility as householders to keep rooms decorated to a good standard and the annual grants are available to claim on the basis that clergy are then able to decorate at least one room per year.



It is Diocesan policy that no bold colours or textured paint/coverings be used for internal decoration as this leads to additional expense due to numerous coats of paint being required to cover it. Neutral colours should be used; bold colours can only be used with prior agreement with the Property Department and written confirmation that remedial works will be carried out prior to the clergy's departure.

Where it is found that decoration is not being maintained to a reasonable standard, or bold colours are being used without agreement, the clergy will be notified that improvements are required at their expense. This policy has been designed to address recent issues with decoration leading to expensive remedial works for the Diocese and parishes.

Assistance with decoration by parishes (which is a matter of generosity not obligation) continues to be encouraged by the Diocese, in cash or kind, in recognition of the use of ground floor rooms in the service of the ministry locally. The level of parish assistance is often agreed at the scheduled pre-occupancy meeting held during an appointment.

PCCs are encouraged to consider a special annual collection towards a PCC parsonage fund to assist with decorating labour costs and small improvements. Such a use very much serves the purpose of the original concept of the Easter Offering.

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### **Departure**

See **Moving Out** on page 21

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### **Disability**

Where alterations are required for the purposes of complying with legislation and accommodating the disability needs of one of the clergy household, the arrangements should be discussed with the Property Department who will be able to arrange these. The cost is often borne by the Diocese, however grants are sometimes available to help with these costs.

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### **Doorbells and Door Knockers**

The Property Department will provide a doorbell or a door knocker if one is not already fitted. Clergy with battery operated doorbells are required to replace the batteries themselves.

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## Drains

Drains and sewer systems that work properly are an essential part of maintaining a property as a safe and healthy environment for living.

In order to keep them working well, clergy can help by:

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Making sure they avoid pouring fatty substances down the sink.

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Making sure those who use the bathrooms and cloakrooms do not flush items down the lavatory that can block the drains.

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Making sure that no forbidden substances are put into the drains that could enter water courses and be subject to action by the Environment Agency; for example, oil or paint. If in any doubt, please contact the Property Department.

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If clergy find they have a problem with drainage, they should contact the Property Department as soon as possible to arrange for a contractor to visit, and they will advise on the action to be taken.

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## Dustbins and Recycling

The arrangements for dustbins and collections vary between local authorities. Clergy are responsible for ensuring the necessary bins are at the property and that they are collected regularly so there is no accumulation of rubbish.

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## Electric Car Charging Points

In principle, the Diocese will support and fund the installation of electric car charging points as long as it is safe to do so, economically feasible and installed by OLEV or NICEIC approved installers.

Clergy can apply for any funding/grant that may be available. Prior to any installation works commencing clergy should send all quotes and details to the Property Department for them to review. If approved the works should be instructed and paid for by the clergy who must then send in the receipts and the electrical installation certificate to the Property Department who will arrange reimbursement.

All electric car charging points funded by the Diocese should be left in place should clergy leave the property. Where clergy have in the past funded an installation and are leaving, they should contact the Property Department. If clergy wish to take the car charging point when they leave, it is their responsibility to ensure it is correctly disconnected and all surfaces are made good.

---

## Electrical

No electrical works should be carried out by the clergy unless they are commissioned and monitored by the Property Department. If clergy have any problems with their electricians between services, they should contact the appointed electrical contractor direct. Clergy are responsible for the costs of the electricity that they use.

## Emergency Repairs

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### Emergency Contact Details

See *supplement*

## Extractors

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In the case of real emergency, i.e. fire or flood, authority is given to the household to take immediate action to reduce further damage.

The Property Department should be contacted at the earliest possible time and the Archdeacon informed.

Extractor fans are provided in kitchens and bathrooms and are maintained by the Property Department; however, clergy are expected to make sure dust and grime are removed from the covers and to provide replacement filters when needed.

### Fences

See **Gardens** below

## Fire Safety

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Smoke detectors are provided to all floor levels of a property and their replacement and repair is managed by the Property Department; however, the provision or replacement of any batteries and the regular testing of smoke detectors is a clergy responsibility. The Property Department is gradually arranging for the installation of hardwired detectors as part of the quinquennial programme. There are a number of vicarages within the Diocese that have sprinkler systems\*.

\*See **Sprinkler Systems** on page 25

## Garages and Parking

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The provision of garages and parking to properties is very dependent on the locality of the property. In urban areas, it may not be possible to provide the desired number of parking spaces, although every effort is made to do so.

## Gardens

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See also **Ponds** on page 22

The upkeep of a garden is a clergy responsibility and includes cutting the lawns regularly, trimming small trees, hedges and shrubs and weeding flower beds, drives, patios and paths.

Trees affect the condition of properties and their roots reach out underground as far as the branches do. These can pose a risk to building foundations. No new tree should be planted within 12 metres of the house. If there are mature trees and they are overhanging public highways, presenting a risk to the building, or have become storm-damaged and dangerous, clergy should consult the Property Department who will appoint a contractor and secure the necessary local authority permissions.

Some trees are subject to a local Tree Preservation Order (TPO) which means that they may not be pruned or cut down without permission. In conservation areas, there may be restrictions on pruning and trimming shrubs and bushes. Ivy and creepers can damage the property by blocking gutters and ventilation and should therefore be regularly maintained and prevented from spreading, however clergy must ensure they are not putting themselves and others at risk by climbing ladders, using power saws or otherwise doing work which requires specialist knowledge.

Internal fencing is normally provided and maintained by the Property Department to divide the front garden from the back for the safety of children. Fencing will not be provided for the protection of pets.

## Garden Sheds Greenhouses Water Butts

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Generally garden sheds and outbuildings are not provided by the Diocese. If there is a shed or outbuilding *in situ* when clergy move in, it is their responsibility to maintain it or remove it. The siting of greenhouses and/or water butts requires permission from the Property Department. These are normally allowed at the clergy's expense provided that they are removed, and all surfaces made good when leaving the property, unless agreed otherwise with the Property Department.

## Gas Fires

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Existing gas fires are serviced annually by the Property Department. They are gradually being phased out as they become unusable. If a gas fire is to be removed, but clergy feel there is still a need for secondary heating, they should contact the Property Department.

## Gas Leaks

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In the event of a suspected gas leak it is important not to operate any electrical or switch device, in case of sparks, and to make sure that there are no sources of flames anywhere. If clergy suspect there is a gas leak, they should immediately open all the windows and, if safe to do so, turn the gas lever near the meter to the off position (usually across the pipe or as marked). They should then dial **0800 111 999** immediately and report the leak to the National Grid.

In addition, the leak must be reported to the Property Department as soon as possible.

## Green Guide

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When the Diocese builds new houses, or upgrades existing houses, the Property Department will endeavour to meet the standards suggested by the Church Commissioners for England in their publication – *Parsonages – A Design Guide*, known widely as the 'Green Guide', but this is conditioned to some extent by funds available and variations agreed by the Committee. This document can be found on the Church of England website: [www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/pastoralandclosedchurches/pastoral/parsdesign.aspx](http://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/pastoralandclosedchurches/pastoral/parsdesign.aspx)

## Gutters

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The clearance of gutters and downpipes is a clergy responsibility and therefore they must be cleared of leaves, moss and debris on an annual basis. Gutter repairs are the responsibility the Property Department and therefore any leaks to gutters should be reported straight away.

## Hedges

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See **Gardens** on page 16

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## Holidays

When clergy are away from their property on holiday or possibly on a sabbatical, it is important to ensure the property is being monitored. Where a property is to be left vacant for more than 14 days, clergy should make arrangements with the Churchwardens to have them make frequent inspections. It is then recommended that the Churchwardens keep written records of their inspection of the property in case an insurance event occurs.

If clergy are to be away for a long period of time during winter, they can arrange with the Property Department to have the property drained down with mains water turned off. Alternatively, the heating system should be left on at a minimum temperature of 15C for the whole time they are away to prevent the possibility of pipes freezing.

If clergy are to leave the property for 60 days or more, they should inform the Property Department to ensure that the correct procedures can be adopted to comply with insurance policies.

## Improvements

See **Alterations and Improvements**  
on page 7

## Infestation

### Mice • Rats • Vermin

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Prevention is better than cure, so it is important that clergy make sure that anything that would attract vermin is removed and destroyed or, in the case of items such as pet food, kept in secure and sealed containers. Spillages and debris that would provide food for vermin should be cleared up immediately.

If clergy think that there is an infestation of rats, wasps (nests), cockroaches or other pests, they should notify the Property Department immediately. If it becomes apparent that the nuisance is caused by poor home management, the clergy may be liable for the costs of removal.

Resolving minor infestation by mice is generally a clergy responsibility. If the infestation is not improving despite treatment, then the Property Department should be contacted.

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## Insulation

The Property Department is responsible for providing insulation and a good standard of insulation is in place in the majority of properties. Where possible, improvements to insulation in line with legislation are being implemented in a planned programme of works.

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## Insurance Buildings

The buildings insurance of a property is the responsibility of the Diocese. This is provided by the Property Department on behalf of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

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## Insurance Contents

The clergy are responsible for the insurance of the building contents at their property. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group provides a special contents scheme for clergy. Their website is [www.ecclesiastical.com](http://www.ecclesiastical.com)

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## Kitchens

Kitchens are refurbished or replaced when they become worn out and when required these works are planned by the Property Department as part of the quinquennial survey of the property. Whenever possible kitchen units are maintained with replacement of doors, drawer fronts and worktops being the normal course of action. Household ideas on the design will be carefully considered but the Property Department will have the final decision.

\*See **Cookers**  
on page 11 for additional guidance

Most kitchens have spaces for free-standing standard sized cookers\*, fridges, freezers, and other appliances. If clergy require alterations to incorporate a non-standard appliance, then they must seek permission from the Property Department. The works may be allowed but would need to be funded by the clergy, and there may also be reinstatement works required prior to leaving.

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## Legal Obligations

### Clergy

See **Responsibility and Obligations** on page 5

### Churchwardens • PCCS • Sequestrators

Legislation places significant responsibilities with respect to the parsonage on the Churchwardens and Rural Dean during a transition period, however the Diocese has adopted a policy which lightens these responsibilities.

The Property Department will carry out grass cutting to garden lawns on a regular basis to avoid them becoming overgrown and unmanageable and will continue to maintain the property as normal. The obligations to the PCC/Churchwardens\* are therefore limited to maintaining the other areas of the garden apart from the lawn and carrying out frequent written inspections to protect the building insurance.

\*See **Role of the PCC** on page 29

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## Light Fittings

The Property Department is responsible for providing light fittings in each room, which means a standard cable and socket or fitted lighting units. If clergy wish to have special lighting fitted including downlighters they must seek written permission from the Property Department. If allowed the works would need to be funded by the clergy and there may be reinstatement works needed on departure. The clergy are responsible for providing light shades and light bulbs.

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## Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

If a building is listed there are additional restrictions on what can be done with the property in terms of maintenance and improvements. Some improvements that clergy would like to have carried out may not be permitted and some items may need to be completed to a particular standard.

A building may be in a conservation area which similarly means that some things are not permitted in relation to the outside of the premises.

Clergy living in listed buildings or conservation areas should speak to the Property Department for advice before undertaking any improvements to ensure they will not be breaching any restrictions.

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## Locks Doors • Windows

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Window locks should be provided to all accessible windows of a property unless the style of window makes this impossible. Standard 5-lever locks are generally provided.

### Lodgers

See **Subletting of Property**  
on page 26

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## Lofts

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Clergy should take great care in accessing and using the loft for storage. They should avoid contact or inhalation of any insulating material in the loft and should be careful and only use stable, secured ladders when accessing the loft space. Only a small number of items, which are not of a nature to cause risk to people or property, should be stored in the loft space. For example, flammable items like camping gas cartridges or items likely to leak and cause damage to ceilings or attract vermin should not be stored in the loft space. When storing items, they should be arranged on boarded areas to spread the weight; any additional laying of boards is to be carried out with the prior consent of the Property Department. Laying of items directly on insulation, is prohibited.

Lofts should not be used for storage unless a loft ladder is fitted.

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## Moving In

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When a new appointment is made, a pre-occupancy meeting is arranged on a convenient date by the Rural Dean. The meeting is chaired by a member of the Archdeaconry Property Committee, and attended by the incoming household, Rural Dean, Churchwardens and the Diocesan Surveyor. The purpose of the meeting is to agree any minor works or internal decoration that may be needed to the property prior to moving and agree which party is responsible for carrying them out and funding them. In addition, the different responsibilities and obligations in maintaining the property are discussed and the procedures involved explained. Moving dates are also decided which then allow the Diocesan Surveyor and Churchwardens to correctly programme the works needed.

Other housekeeping matters are also addressed while all parties are present, such as collection of keys, reading meters, collecting accumulated post, arrangements the Churchwardens have made for the care of the grounds during the vacancy, also clarification of any temporary parochial use of the property during the vacancy, and how this use will be brought to an end before the new household arrive.

It should be noted that significant Diocesan funded improvement works to a property would not be contemplated at the pre-occupancy meeting, unless they have already been identified at the pre-vacancy stage or agreed as part of an appointment and have already been authorised by the Archdeaconry Committee.



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## Moving Out

### Schedule of Condition

Once all works and decorations are complete and prior to the arrival of a new clergy moving into a property, a full pictorial Inventory and Schedule of Condition will be compiled. This document will record the condition of the property at the start of an occupancy and can be referred to by a household when they leave.

Once clergy have announced they are departing and know the dates involved the following procedures and tasks should be carried out:

The clergy should notify the Property Department by email or written letter detailing the date they are leaving as soon as possible.

Upon receiving this notification, the Property Department will send a standard letter detailing the importance of leaving the property in good order and also arrange for an early visit and inspection of the property to check its condition and detail what works, if any, are required.

The clergy should ensure that all sets of keys are left at the property and a set given to the Churchwarden.

The clergy should provide the Property Department with details of companies supplying the utilities at the property.

The clergy should provide the Property Department with final meter reading on the date they leave.

The clergy should provide the Property Department with a forwarding address (*note the Diocese do not provide a mail forwarding service*).

The clergy should provide all codes for any security alarms that have been fitted.

The clergy should ensure that all belongings are removed and not left at the property when departing. Only items that have written permission with the Property Department should be left.

The clergy should ensure that the property is cleaned throughout prior to departure and this will be checked on the day of departure.

The clergy should ensure that any bold colours used throughout the property are decorated back to a neutral colour prior to their departure.

The clergy should ensure that the garden to the property is tidy and this will be checked on the day of departure.

On the rare occasion that neglect of a property is found, the Archdeacon is informed who will then seek to address the issues raised with any remedial works required funded by the outgoing clergy.

## Net Zero

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The Church of England's General Synod has set new targets for all parts of the church to work to become carbon 'Net Zero' by 2030.

Salisbury Diocese are therefore working towards achieving year-on-year reductions in carbon emissions and works towards making clergy properties more energy efficient will play a major part in this. More information on the 'Net Zero' targets and how they can be achieved can be found via the Property Department.

## Parish Offices and Meeting Rooms

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Clergy property, whether it is a Vicarage or a Parsonage, can often be used for meetings with members of the public, the congregation and for some functions.

The permanent use of property as a parish office or designating part as a parish meeting room should not occur unless the prior written consent of the Property Department has been obtained. If consent is given, then there may need to be agreements set up on use of electricity and water and how these costs will be paid.

## Pets

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Subject to compliance with the Ecclesiastical Measures, pets may be kept in the house and garden.

The clergy are expected to exercise common sense about the effects of their choice of animals in terms of potential impact on the maintenance of the property and relationships with neighbours. The household are responsible for providing any additional fencing that is required to keep the pets within the garden. Any damage caused by pets to the fabric of the property or the garden will be repaired at the clergy's expense.

Permission of the Property Department before fitting a cat/dog flap is needed and this will normally be granted provided that clergy agree to reinstate doors to their original condition prior to departure.

## Ponds

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The existence of ponds in parsonage gardens is being phased out.

Clergy should not create a pond in their garden without the consent of the Property Department. Consent will only be granted providing they are properly insured against risks and agree to provide for the pond to be filled in on departure.

## Quinquennial Surveys and Works

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The Property Department will co-ordinate the programme and delivery of quinquennial surveys ('QQ'), the timing and requirements of which are set out in the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure.

Clergy are notified when a QQ inspection is due and a date agreed. The survey undertaken by the Diocesan Surveyor can take between one to two hours depending on the size of the property. The Diocesan Surveyor will then produce a comprehensive report giving answers to certain questions (as required by the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972), and a schedule of repairs. Clergy are then sent a copy of the survey report to review and approve. Once the report is approved, it is the

Property Department's aim that the recommended works are completed within 12 months. This timeframe may be slightly longer while the current backlog is being dealt with.

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## Rights of Way

The law relating to rights of way is complicated, and it is important to prevent the unintentional creation of a right of way by allowing the public to cross parsonage land regularly over a period of years (other than by using the appointed route to the front door).

If there are concerns that long-term use of a route across the property by the public may be creating a right of way, clergy should contact the Property Department immediately.

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## Satellite Dishes and Television Aerials

Satellite dishes are a clergy household responsibility.

Clergy must seek the Property Department's prior consent if they wish to install or replace a satellite dish at their own expense (as it could breach local authority rules or covenants imposed on the property).

The main television aerial to a property is the responsibility of the Diocese and any repairs or replacement need to be agreed with the Property Department.

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## Seagulls

In recent years seagulls have become a nuisance problem to some properties particularly those in coastal locations. They can be very aggressive and intimidating causing problems to clergy, particularly during their nesting season. As they are protected, there are issues in moving them and once a nest is formed in nesting season it cannot be moved.

Bird spikes have been added to a number of properties to prevent seagulls nesting and the maintenance of these is the responsibility of the Property Department. If clergy need bird spikes repaired or require bird spikes as they are concerned that seagulls may nest, they should contact the Property Department.

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## Septic Tanks and Private Sewerage Systems Including Pumps

The Diocese is responsible for overseeing the works relating to a septic tank and any problems that arise with its maintenance or emptying.

Clergy should contact the Property Department if they have any queries relating to septic tanks and other private sewerage systems, including pumps. The Diocese are responsible for any clergy sewerage charges that arise.

See **Drains** on page 15

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## Shelving

Clergy study areas are provided with up to 20 metres of shelving for books and this must remain behind when they leave the property.

Clergy may add other shelving at their own expense, but they must take prior advice from the Property Department about fixings to the walls to avoid damaging cabling and plasterwork. When removing shelving on departure, it is a clergy responsibility to make good the damage from any fixings.

## Showers

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The Diocese will provide at least one shower in each property. No right exists for the installation of additional showers or provision of showers separate to baths. Where additional showers are felt needed due to the size of household or possibly for mobility issues, the Property Department should be contacted. They can then review the request and liaise with the Archdeacon in order to make an informed decision.

In some instances, clergy may wish to fund the installation of an additional shower themselves. This may be possible, however written consent must be given by the Property Department to ensure they are happy with the proposal and can ensure the contractors are competent, have insurance and all health and safety measures are in place.

## Solar Panels

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A number of properties in the Diocese have solar panels fitted to roof coverings and these consist of 2 types:  
Solar PV Panels and Solar Thermal panels.

### Solar PV Panels

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Solar PV is a solar panel electricity system on a roof that captures the sun's energy and converts sunlight into electricity to use free of charge within a property. Solar PV does attract tariffs for power generation and electricity returned to the grid, but these are paid direct to the Diocese. **However,** during daylight hours, clergy can benefit from being able to use **FREE** within their home all the energy that is generated by the Solar PV.

In order to ensure the solar panels are working properly and to receive the feed in tariff, clergy will be asked by the Property Department to submit meter readings from the Solar PV meter located in the property from time to time. Co-operation in providing these reading is greatly appreciated.

The maintenance and cleaning of the Solar PV system are the responsibility of the Diocese and will be arranged by the Property Department.

### Solar Thermal Panels

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Solar Thermal is a solar water heating system that uses heat from the sun to produce hot water. A solar panel is fitted on roof to collect heat. This is then used to heat water, which is stored in the hot water tank in a property. A solar thermal water system can provide a large portion of hot water over the summer months and therefore can provide a saving on energy costs to clergy where they are fitted.

The maintenance and cleaning of the Solar Thermal system are the responsibility of the Diocese and will be arranged by the Property Department.

No meter readings are needed or necessary with this system.

## Sprinkler Systems

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Fire sprinkler systems have been fitted to a number of properties and are designed to save lives and prevent injuries to both the building's occupants and the emergency services from fire and smoke. The systems are separate from the smoke detection system and therefore will not go off easily, only by a large increase in room temperature due to a fire. The fire sprinklers prevent a fire from taking hold and spreading to other rooms. They operate by releasing a spray of water to suppress or extinguish a fire as soon as the heat reaches a certain temperature.

The annual maintenance of the fire sprinkler system is the responsibility of the Diocese and will be arranged by the Property Department.

To ensure that the fire sprinkler system will operate effectively when it is needed, clergy should not paint over the sprinkler head locations, hang any items in front of the heads e.g. pictures, try to remove the covers or intentionally damage the system in any way.

If clergy are concerned that a head may have been accidentally damaged, they should immediately report this to the Property Department.

## Stoves Woodburning • Multi-fuel

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If clergy wish to install a wood burning or multi-fuel stove, then they should first contact the Property Department who will assess if the installation is feasible. If found to be feasible then the works would need to be fully funded by the clergy and the following criteria must be followed:

The proposed appliance must be of good quality and fitted by an authorised installer.

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The installation must be compliant with approved Document Part J [Combustion Appliances and Fuel Storage Systems] of the Building Regulations and approved Document Part L 1B [Conservation of Fuel and Power in Existing Dwellings].

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Ventilation shall be in accordance with approved Document Part F.

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The Diocesan Surveyor must be satisfied that the relevant Regulations have been complied with and written evidence produced.

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The hearth must be of a suitable construction and size to be fire-proof and large enough to accept burning embers falling from the stove when open.

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The flue must be of stainless steel, double wall insulated of a suitable size for the appliance and be fitted with an access for cleaning all in accordance with the regulations.

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The flue must be fitted with a suitable DFE cowl.

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Logs must be kept under cover in a well-ventilated store and seasoned to a maximum 20% moisture content (at least 2 years since cutting).

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Assurance that the stove can be used under the Clean Air Act 1993 and this should be confirmed with the relevant local authority.

The Diocese will not be responsible for obtaining the necessary consents and unless specific approval is given for removal, the installation shall remain in the property when the occupancy ceases. Alternatively, any flue liner shall be removed, and the original fireplace be reinstated at the householder's expense.

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All interim repairs including consequential works associated with the installation shall be the responsibility of the household.

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A carbon monoxide detector should be fitted in the room in which the appliance is installed.

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## Subletting of Property

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Clergy are entitled to allow family members to reside with them in the property.

However, if they wish to share their home with anyone who is not a family member, they must apply for prior written consent from the Property Department whose decision will be final.

It is possible to take in lodgers, but clergy must consult with, and obtain written permission from the Property Department before doing so. The Property Department will provide a written Lodger's Agreement, which should be entered into before the lodger takes up occupation. Clergy should be aware that if the 25% reduction in Council Tax for single occupancy is lost due to lodgers, this will be chargeable to the household. Some properties (particularly those rented rather than owned by the Diocese) may be subject to legal restrictions in this regard.

## Telephone

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The installation of a telephone line and broadband internet from the clergy's chosen network provider is their responsibility.

Any agreements for the digging and laying of any cabling will require the prior written approval of the Property Department.

The bill for the telephone and broadband internet is funded by the clergy, however the PCC should pay expenses relating to the cost of ministry-related calls and internet use.

### Trees

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See **Gardens** on page 16

### Walls

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See **Boundaries** on page 9

## Washing Machines

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Plumbing for a washing machine and a dishwasher is supplied as standard to properties where possible. If there is a fitted washing machine or dishwasher the clergy can use and maintain it but replacement and repair is their responsibility. The plumbing of new and replacement washing machines and dishwashers is also the clergy's responsibility.

### Water Butts

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See **Garden Sheds Greenhouses**

**Water Butts** on page 17

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## Water Rates

The Diocese is responsible for water rates payment on behalf of clergy and this is paid directly by the Property Department. Any correspondence received regarding water rates should be sent to the Property Department unanswered.

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## Window Replacement

The Diocesan properties have a very diverse range of window design and construction and some properties have restrictions on what can be done because of listing or conservation issues. There is a programme for window replacement and all requests will be considered within the limits of what can be achieved both financially and practically.

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## Woodblock Flooring

The Property Department is responsible for the maintenance of woodblock flooring and will arrange for the sanding, polishing and staining of any woodblock flooring at ingoing works if necessary.

The cleaning of the woodblock flooring and further staining if needed during occupancy is the responsibility of the clergy. The following guidance is to be followed regarding woodblock flooring:

Permission should always be sought before woodblock flooring is overlaid by any form of floor covering except loose rugs.

Because of the risk of condensation damage, woodblock flooring should **never** be covered by linoleum or vinyl sheeting.

No carpet or other covering should ever be stuck, glued or tacked to a woodblock surface. Adhesive, double-sided tape and nails will cause unsightly damage to the surface. Where fitting carpets over woodblock flooring perimeter carpet gripper strips or loose-lay should be used unless agreed with the Property Department.

There is a variety of methods for cleaning and protecting woodblock flooring, but households should avoid using water, which will cause the blocks to warp and lift away from their bitumen base.

Woodblock floors are no longer provided in new houses. Alternative hardwearing surfaces have now taken their place.

To protect woodblock flooring from scratches protective felt pads can be fitted to furniture.

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## Work Instructions

Work instructions are issued by the Property Department to contractors and consultants working at a property. Such orders enable the monitoring of any work contract and the related expenditure. They are sent electronically, and clergy are normally notified so that the contractor can be provided with direct contact details to agree the timing of the work.

Households should not contact the contractor directly to change the specification of any work and must contact the Property Department to seek approval of any changes.





# The Role of the PCC

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## During Transitions

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The role of the PCC is an important part of maintaining and caring for a Diocesan property and the Diocese are forever thankful for the works that they undertake, particularly during a transition.

During a transition (previously known as 'interregnum' or 'vacancy') the PCC/Churchwardens (acting on behalf of the Bishop) technically have a responsibility to look after a parsonage until the new priest moves in.

The Diocese has adopted a policy which lightens these responsibilities and the Property Department is now responsible for arranging grass cutting to garden lawns on a regular basis, and the continual management and maintenance of the property including insurance, water rates, Council Tax, outside decoration and major repairs. The obligations to the PCC/Churchwardens are therefore limited to the following areas:

### Central heating

The PCC/Churchwardens are expected to liaise with the Property Department to ensure that the entire central heating and plumbing systems will be drained down. The Diocese will arrange and pay for the costs of such work. Frost damage in vacant houses cannot be recovered under an insurance policy. PCCs may run the central heating during a vacancy (subject to the property being heated to a minimum of 8°C between October and March inclusive) as long as they are prepared to pay the running costs and to take responsibility for any subsequent damage if the system fails.

### Telephone

The PCC/Churchwardens are expected to check that the account for the outgoing clergy should be closed. The service may be transferred into the name of the PCC if desired, but the Diocese will not reimburse any charges. PCCs should be wary of entering into new contracts that may have minimum term lengths (e.g. 12 or 18 months). These should probably be avoided, as there may be cost penalties if the PCC decides to end the contract during the minimum term.

### Electricity and Gas

The PCC/Churchwardens are expected to arrange for these supplies to be turned off. Suppliers should be contacted with meter readings. Whilst the property is vacant accounts should be put in the name of the PCC or a Churchwarden. Quarterly standing charges may be forwarded to the Property Department for reimbursement.

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## **Security**

The PCC/Churchwardens are expected to advise the Property Department of the name, address and telephone number of the keyholder/s. In addition, a Churchwarden or someone from the parish should inspect the property at least twice weekly, writing an inspection sheet on each visit which are to be kept in case of an insurance event, such as a break in. No temporary occupation of the house can be permitted unless agreed with the Property Department.

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## **Garden**

The PCC/Churchwardens are expected to liaise with the Property Department to ensure the garden is maintained during a vacancy. The Diocese will pay for essential garden upkeep such as cutting the lawn and treating drives and paths with weed killer. Expenses regarding these works can be paid directly to a local garden maintenance contractor or reimbursed, however these costs should be agreed beforehand. Other areas of garden maintenance would generally be the responsibility of the PCC/Churchwardens and include weeding or watering of flower beds, and cutting and trimming of plants, hedges and small trees. If a garden seems to be in need of very major work, then the Property Department should be consulted.

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## **Internal Decoration**

The PCC/Churchwardens are encouraged to consider at least some decoration during a transition. The Diocese can assist with some of the materials costs as there are annual decoration grants that can be claimed. The Property Department should be consulted prior to any decoration works commencing, to agree their extent and to also discuss the grants available. No bold colours or textured paint/coverings should be used for internal decoration as this leads to additional expense because numerous coats of paint are required to cover it.

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## **Parish Use**

The PCC/Churchwardens are expected to contact and agree any use of the premises while vacant with the Property Department. The PCC/Churchwardens must be aware that whatever the practice of the previous clergy, the continued use (e.g. storing parish equipment) cannot be assumed to continue once a new appointment is made and would need to be agreed with the new clergy.

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## Letting

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It is the Diocese policy to let parsonage houses, wherever it is possible, during a transition period.

All negotiations and administration regarding the letting of the property will be conducted by the Property Department or their appointed agent. If access to the property for interview candidates is required, the PCC/Churchwardens should contact the Property Department to arrange this rather than speaking directly to any tenants.

At the beginning of a transition, and prior to any letting, an inspection of the parsonage house will be arranged in order to establish if improvements or repairs are necessary. The initial inspection will be carried out by the Property Department and details of this work will be shared with the Churchwardens for their comment and feedback. Whilst it may not be possible to incorporate any proposals made by the Churchwardens, every effort will be made to consider and reflect on them.

Dependent upon the extent of work required, it will be agreed with the Archdeacon whether or not work is carried out before a letting or new appointment is made. Where choice of colours, kitchen doors etc. are involved, it is usual to await appointment of the new minister so that the views and nature of the new family can be taken into account, however this may not always be possible and where works need to be carried out prior to any appointment the PCC/Churchwardens will be consulted.

Any works undertaken to the property while vacant will be overseen by the Property Department who will ensure they are carried out by responsible contractors, with all necessary insurance and health and safety requirements being met. Access to the property internally is therefore restricted during all works. Any PCC member wishing to access the property should first consult the Property Department, even if keys are held locally.

Every endeavour is made to ensure that the agreed works are completed before new clergy move in, but the ability to achieve this does depend on the time scale involved and the scope of the works.

## Utilities

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Whilst the property is empty, as detailed above the utilities such as water, gas and electricity and telephone should be turned off and payment of standing charges regarding these become the responsibility of the Diocese. Before departing, the outgoing clergy is required to transfer responsibility for these utilities to the Diocese.

The PCC/Churchwardens should forward any utility bills, or notices from local authorities that are addressed to the house, to the Property Department. There are occasions where the PCC/Churchwardens may wish to use the property during a vacancy and therefore do not want utilities to be turned off. This arrangement must first be agreed with the Property Department who will liaise with the

Archdeacon to come to a decision and agree the financial arrangement of paying utility bills during the vacancy.

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## Keys

Before departing, the outgoing clergy should hand all keys for the property to the PCC/Churchwardens and they are expected to inform the Property Department of the chosen keyholders.

It is sometimes normal practice to have a secure key press fitted to a property to enable appointed contractors to access the property without having to meet the PPC/Churchwardens. This would first need to be agreed with the PCC/Churchwardens and they are informed prior to any visits to ensure they are aware of the works being carried out.

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## Insurance

The Diocese are responsible for the ongoing building insurance of a parsonage house, but whilst it is empty there is a significantly reduced level of cover. During the winter months as detailed above the heating system is normally drained for this reason. The PCC/Churchwardens must be aware that any property left in the parsonage house belonging to the them will not be insured. The PCC/Churchwardens are therefore asked to ensure that any equipment stored in the property is removed at the time it is vacated.



