

**PARSONAGE HOUSES, TEAM VICARAGES  
AND  
DIOCESAN-OWNED ASSISTANT STAFF HOUSES**

1. **The provision and care of clergy houses** is the responsibility of the Board of Finance. There is a Committee of the Board for each Archdeaconry which normally meets each quarter. This is chaired by the Archdeacon and consists of representative Clergy and laity [including Clergy Spouses] who have knowledge of and concern for clergy housing in their area. The name/s of your local member/s can be obtained from the Property Manager and you are encouraged to discuss your concerns with the member/s. The Property Manager attends each meeting.
2. It is the Board's practice to replace older and often over-large properties wherever possible with either purpose-built parsonages or suitable open market housing which are more economical for the Diocese and the priest to maintain and run.
3. **Quinquennial surveys** are carried out by the Diocesan Surveyor, and essential repairs and external redecoration carried out to maintain the property in good order.
4. If there is need for urgent interim repairs between surveys, details should be submitted to the Property Manager, and no work should be put in hand without prior authorisation, except in an emergency when he should be contacted as soon as possible.
5. **Internal decoration** is the responsibility of the occupier and it is suggested that a programme of gradual redecoration [say 2 rooms per year] will enable the interior of the house to be kept up to standard. Upon vacation, houses are expected to be left in reasonable decorative order. It is the policy of the Board [subject to available funds] to offer a certain sum towards materials while leaving the occupier of the house responsible for finding the labour. It is being increasingly found that PCCs are accepting this responsibility by either paying for the labour or carrying out the work on a parish DIY basis. A vacancy is an appropriate time for any major redecoration to be carried out. Please refer to the separate leaflet on the terms of the materials grant. The Diocese holds a personal Accident Policy for all parish volunteers working in a parsonage house or a Diocesan-owned Assistant Staff house. Details of any accident should be notified to the Property Manager without delay.
6. **Minor Repairs** [e.g. rewashering taps, repairs to window catches etc] should, wherever possible, be a local responsibility and be paid for by occupiers and/or their PCCs and should not be referred to the Property Manager.
7. **Insurance** - damage as a result of frost, accidental breakage, storm, flood, theft, impact or vandalism should be reported to the Property Manager **within 15 days** with full details of how and when the incident occurred. Expenditure on remedial work can be claimed by the Board on the Insurance Policy. Avoidable damage by the household cannot be paid for by the Board unless a claim is accepted by the Insurance Company. The Diocesan insurance policy does not cover any private or personal property [such as greenhouses]. This is a matter for householders' own contents policies.
8. **Central heating systems and gas appliances** receive regular servicing once a year under central contracts arranged directly by the Board. All faults should be reported to the authorised contractor. The Board will **not** pay accounts from any other firm.

9. **Heating oil** - Clergy should take steps to ensure that escape of central heating oil is covered under the terms of their contents insurance policy to avoid financial loss in the event of undetected rusting out or failure of the oil tank.
10. **Garden watering** - if sprinklers or unattended hosepipes are to be used the householder should notify the Water Authority and must pay all charges arising.
11. **Council Tax** – Council Tax and Water Rates for authorised posts in Diocesan houses are arranged and paid directly by the Board. Any correspondence received on these matters should be sent to the Property Manager unanswered.

The Board is entitled to a 25% Council Tax discount for any house with a single occupier. Where this discount is lost because the householder takes in a lodger, equivalent reimbursement must be made by the householder to the Board.
12. **During a vacancy** the Board will continue to be responsible for insurance, water rates, Council Tax, outside decoration and major repairs. However, your attention is drawn to the following:
  - [a] **Central heating:** Churchwardens are expected to liaise with the Property Department and if necessary remind it that the entire central heating and plumbing systems need to be drained down. The Diocese will arrange and pay for the costs of such work. Frost damage in vacant houses cannot be recovered under the 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
  - [b] **Telephone:** the account for the outgoing occupier should be closed. The service may be transferred into the name of the PCC if desired, but the Board will not reimburse any charges. PCC's should be wary of entering into new contracts that may have minimum term lengths (eg 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.
  - [c] **Electricity/Gas:** these supplies must 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 Secretary for reimbursement.
  - [d] **Security:** please advise the Property Secretary of the name, address and telephone number of the keyholder/s. Someone from the parish should walk around the house and property in general at least three times a week to check that the building is secure and there has been no unauthorised access. No temporary occupation of the house can be permitted unless arranged by an officer of the Board.
  - [e] **Garden:** the Board will pay for essential upkeep which should amount to no more than cutting the lawn and treating drives and paths with weedkiller. If you incur expense for such work the account can be sent to the Property Manager, who should be consulted in advance if the garden seems to be in need of very major attention.
  - [f] **Internal Decoration:** The PCC is encouraged to consider at least some decoration during an interregnum. The Diocese can assist with some of the materials costs. [See "*Internal Decoration Grant*" leaflet]
  - [g] Any use of the premises by the parish while vacant should first be discussed with the Property Manager. Whatever the practice of the previous household, continued use for storing parish equipment etc cannot be assumed to continue once the house is re-occupied.

13. **No alterations may be made to houses without consulting the Committee.** If occupiers wish to make improvements at their own expense details should be submitted to the Property Manager.
14. The responsibility for keeping chimneys properly swept lies with the occupier. **Wood burning stoves** can cause grave problems in chimney breasts etc., and may not be installed without authorisation. The Diocesan Surveyor will be glad to advise on this or other such technical matters. Likewise the occupier is responsible for dealing with bees, wasps and mice. Rat infestation will be dealt with by the Board on notification to the Property Manager.
15. The Board does not pay for the provision or replacement of electric or gas cookers, nor for their maintenance. Purchase grants are made on new appointments in certain limited circumstances. [See "Provision of Cookers" leaflet]
16. The cost of maintaining our Clergy houses is absorbing a large proportion of the Diocesan Budget. Anything the Clergy and PCCs can do to keep down such expenditure will be in their own interest.

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