



DIOCESE OF
YORK

**Help and Guidance
for Churchwardens
during a
Vacancy in a Benefice**

THE
ARCHBISHOP
OF YORK



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My dearly Beloved Churchwardens,

I thank God for the ministry of Churchwardens, for your hard work and dedication. I am very aware that as you approach a vacancy you will have more responsibilities to fulfil and it is for this reason that this booklet has been prepared to help you. It contains useful information and advice to assist you through the vacancy.

Don't forget that if you have any queries that are not covered in this booklet there are many people who are there to help you. As a first port of call you can speak to your Rural Dean. You can also contact your Archdeacon or any of the staff at Diocesan House (01904 699500). The booklet does not contain information about the appointment process but your Archdeacon will be in touch with you about this and he or your Bishop can be consulted about this at any time.

Thank you for willingness to serve Christ as a Churchwarden, for your commitment and the time that you devote to the life of your church.

As you look forward to the beginning of a new chapter in the life of your church and parish, may God sustain you through the vacancy and guide you clearly through the appointment process.

With every blessing,

H. Sentamu

1 During a vacancy the Area Dean has care of the parish together with the Churchwardens. The staff at the Diocesan Office are available to help, particularly with financial and parsonage matters. The Archdeacon is also available for consultation in particular difficulties.

2 Duties of Churchwardens during a vacancy

- a) To ensure that regular Services of Worship take place and other aspects of the church's ministry in conjunction with the Area Dean.
- b) To collect statutory fees and disburse them as appropriate.
- c) To care for the parsonage house and other benefice property.

3 Church Services

- a) Before the vacancy begins, the Churchwardens should discuss with the Area Dean (and with any assistant Clergy and/or Readers in the benefice if applicable) the pattern of services, bearing in mind:
 - the needs of the benefice
 - the availability of Clergy and Readers
 - the cost of providing the services
 - the pastoral considerations
- b) It may not always be possible to provide a full pattern of services and the following guidelines are suggested:
 - Holy Communion should be celebrated each Sunday in every parish church, or in the case of a plurality or united benefice, in at least one of the churches in the group.
 - If there is a regular well-attended service, every effort should be made to retain it at the accustomed time.
 - Sometimes a change of time will be necessary and sometimes a service of Holy Communion may have to be offered on Sunday evening rather than Sunday morning, or on a weekday during the day time or evening instead of Sunday.
 - The Bishop may be willing in some circumstances to agree to one or more services of Public Worship with Holy Communion by Extension being held. Please note carefully that specific permission is required on each occasion.

- If no clergy are readily available, a service of *Morning Prayer* and *Evening Prayer* or *A Service of the Word* should, if possible, be led by those who are formally licensed to do so. The Area Dean will help the Churchwardens whenever necessary in seeking help from the Clergy or Readers in the area.
- c) If none of these is available, the provisions of Canon B11(4), which provides for lay people to conduct *Morning Prayer* and *Evening Prayer*, are to be noted. The permission in the Canon does not extend to preaching, but the Area Dean should be prepared to offer guidance regarding readings in place of a sermon, and arrange for the training of those taking part. It is often more satisfactory to invite a group of people to share in taking such services rather than entrust the whole of a service to one lay person.
- d) If Holy Communion cannot be provided at the normal time, alternative provision should be made for *Morning Prayer* or *Evening Prayer* or *A Service of the Word* at the same time, in the ways described in the previous guidelines.
- e) Holy Baptism should normally be administered during the course of a service, or if this is impossible, immediately following a service. Special visits to a parish simply to baptise should, if possible, be avoided.
- f) Mid-week services of Holy Communion [as distinct from home Communion for those who are ill - see 4b below] may be held in a vacancy if clergy are available and willing to conduct them, but **no payment can be claimed under 5b for mid-week services** (except on Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Ascension Day) **unless authorisation for this has been given by the Archdeacon beforehand**. Normally the PCC should pay any fee required and the expenses of travel for mid-week services. (See *Fees for Casual Duty*).
- g) Any questions about the pattern of services during the vacancy that cannot be settled by the Area Dean should be referred to the Bishop, or the Archdeacon.

4 Pastoral Care

- a) Any clergy or licensed lay workers in the parish will continue their pastoral work under the direction of the Area Dean. The Bishop may agree that some pastoral duties be delegated to a retired clergyperson living in the parish or nearby and the Bishop must consult with the Diocesan Secretary about financial issues related to this before permission is given.
- b) During the vacancy, provision should be made after consultation with the Area Dean for Holy Communion to be taken to anyone who is ill or infirm and also for pastoral care for those who are dying, and of other

parishioners in urgent need. Pastoral visits will also be required for baptism and marriage preparation.

5 Baptisms, Funerals and Marriages

- a) It would be helpful if one person could act as the point of contact for enquiries about these occasional offices. If there is an assistant minister in the parish or benefice, he or she may take on this responsibility. Where there is not, it would be helpful to find a lay person who would agree to do this. This person's name and contact details should be given to local Funeral Directors. The Area Dean is on hand to give advice and support.

6 Fees and Expenses

- a) **Parochial Fees:** A copy of the table of fees may have been sent with this booklet and can be found at www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/fees. The statutory fees which are mainly for Marriages, Funerals and Monuments are to be paid to the Diocesan Board of Finance at monthly intervals. Where one of the services for which a fee is shown in column 2 is taken by a retired Minister who was formerly stipendiary or taken by a Minister from another Diocese he or she should be paid the appropriate fee.
- b) **Fees for Visiting Ministers:** A copy of *Fees for Casual Duty* may have been sent with this booklet. It can also be found at www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/fees. As it states, fees for taking services on Sundays and on principal Christian festivals will be paid by the Diocese. However, these are only due to retired clergy who were formally stipendiary.
- c) **Travelling Expenses for Services:** Any person who officiates at a service should be fully reimbursed for these. In the case of Sunday services and principal festivals, these will be met by the Diocese. Visiting Ministers are responsible for claiming their own expenses and fees where appropriate direct from the Diocesan Office; the PCC should not pay these expenses. However, the Churchwardens should remind the visiting ministers of their entitlement and check they have an appropriate form on which to make the claim. A small supply of forms should have been enclosed with this booklet.
- d) **Travel Expenses for Pastoral Visits:** The PCC is responsible for paying these expenses (see section 4b) and for ensuring that Assistant Clergy serving in the Parish, Readers, or retired clergy undertaking pastoral care (see 4a) are reimbursed in full for expenses incurred on Parish duties. Ministers from outside the Parish conducting marriages and funerals should receive from the PCC appropriate expenses unless they are reimbursed from elsewhere (eg by or through the Funeral Director in cases of funerals).

7 Collections at Funerals

- a) Although families do not have an actual right to hold collections for third-party charities at funerals, the custom is widespread. The family or undertaker must agree the appropriateness of any collection with the Officiating Minister, the Area Dean or the churchwardens before notice is given to the press and the service takes place. If the members of a family wish to pass on a donation personally a cheque, made payable to the charity, may be sent to them.
- b) All money collected in Church that is to be given to the named Charity, whether in sealed envelopes or not, should be recorded in and passed through the Church accounts. Cash should not be handed over to the family or undertaker after the service.
- c) Unless otherwise previously agreed by the family and the Officiating Minister, all money collected in Church at the funeral shall be sent to the nominated charity and the family informed of the amount that has been sent.

8 The Parsonage House and Grounds

- a) The Churchwardens should notify the water authority immediately the house becomes vacant. The Property Team at the Diocesan Office should be notified that the house has become vacant so that adjustments can be made in Council Tax payments to the local authority.
- b) The house may be let during a vacancy and the Archdeacon will discuss this possibility with the Churchwardens. Arrangements for a let and the management of a tenancy will be undertaken by the Property Team at Diocesan House.
- c) All houses are insured with *Ecclesiastical*. A condition of the policy is that, when a house is empty, a security check should be carried out by the Churchwardens or a deputy twice weekly, both inside as well as outside the premises.
- d) The Diocesan Property Sub-Committee does not maintain any contents insurance for parsonage houses. The Churchwardens should therefore ensure that appropriate contents insurance remains in place for any items remaining in the property, but see section j) below.
- e) The existing telephone number will only be preserved if the PCC maintains the telephone line as the subscriber. If it is disconnected a new number may be allocated when it is reconnected. Discretion is left to the PCC to decide whether the telephone line should be retained and, if so the, PCC should pay the bills during the vacancy.
- f) While the house is unoccupied the central heating may be left on so long as the frost thermostat is left at a minimum of 6°C. The cost of this is borne by the PCC. As well as benefitting the house it will be more welcoming for prospective candidates if interviews take place during winter months.

Alternatively the Property Team will arrange for the gas and electricity to be turned off at the mains for reasons of insurance. The water will also be turned off and will be drained out of the systems as burst pipes are not covered by insurance. Whichever option is used the Property Team should have been consulted.

- g) Electricity/Gas and all service charges are the responsibility of the PCC during a vacancy. Where major works are undertaken to a property the DBF will make a contribution towards the costs over and above the standing charge. Meters must be read prior to commencement of the works so that a fair assessment can be made of the usage incurred.
- h) Day to day running repairs are the responsibility of the PCC. Please contact the Diocesan Property Team prior to ordering a repair and if you are in any doubt about the scope of work required. Do bear in mind that the need for a minor repair (such as a slipped slate) may indicate larger imminent failures of which the Diocesan Property Team may need to be aware. Major Repairs have to be considered by the Property Committee. Unauthorised repair expenditure will not automatically be passed for payment, so it is good practice to contact the office. Gutters and all pipes should be kept clear. In an emergency the Archdeacon should be consulted.
- i) No part of the parsonage, including outbuildings or gardens should be used for parish purposes during a vacancy unless this has been agreed with the Archdeacon or the Property Team.
- j) The Churchwardens must notify the Property Team immediately when anything occurs which might involve a claim under the insurance policy.
- k) Equipment that is used by a Church Secretary, Administrator or others, including office machinery and filing cabinets must be removed from the parsonage house unless the Archdeacon has consented to them remaining. It should not be assumed that a new successor in office would automatically consent to their return once the appointment has been made.
- l) It is important that the house is aired before the arrival of the new incumbent. It is also the responsibility of the Churchwardens to see that the house is cleaned before the arrival of the new incumbent and for the PCC to pay for this when necessary.
- m) The Churchwardens are responsible for the upkeep of the garden of the Parsonage House. The grass should be cut regularly, and before the new Incumbent arrives the garden should be tidied. This work should be paid for by the PCC. Trees should not be trimmed or felled without consent from the Diocesan Surveyor. In some places the Property Team will need to consult the planning authority.

- n) When a new Incumbent or Priest in Charge comes to the Parish the removal expenses will be reimbursed in full by the Diocese if the removal is within the British Isles. A moving-in grant will also be paid towards the cost of alterations of curtains and carpets. The PCC should not purchase carpets or curtains from the outgoing Incumbent.

9 PCC Responsibilities

- a) The PCC should continue to pay its Free Will Offering to the Common Fund as set out in the monthly statement.
- b) The PCC should continue to pay any Water Rates assessed on the Parsonage, and any rental of the telephone where appropriate, and the standing charge for the gas. (See paragraph 8).
- c) The PCC should cover the expenses for pastoral ministry as identified in paragraph 4.
- d) The PCC is asked to cover the cost of maintaining the Parsonage garden [see paragraph 8m)] and cleaning the house before the new Incumbent arrives [see paragraph 8l)].

10 Churches and Churchyards

- a) Fabric: In general, no repairs, decorations or alterations to the church and to its fittings may be carried out without first obtaining a Faculty. There are exceptions for certain minor works which are listed on the diocesan website, but please note that low cost is not itself a reason for being able to carry out work without a Faculty. If there is any doubt, the Archdeacon should be consulted.
- b) Memorials: Churchwardens are responsible for seeing that all proposed memorials to be erected in the churchyard are strictly in accordance with the Diocesan regulations and authorised by the Rural Dean. If there is any doubt, the Archdeacon should be consulted.
- c) Trees: The Secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches or the Archdeacon should be consulted regarding trees.

11 PCC Meetings and Annual Church Meetings

In a vacancy, these meetings are usually chaired by the Vice-Chair of the PCC. Information about this, about what happens when a Vice-Chair is not available, and about such things as the calling of meetings and preparation of agendas can be found in the *Church Representation Rules* (see especially Part Two and Appendix II). This is available on line at:

www.churchofengland.org/church-representation-rules-online

12 Glebe Land

The Churchwardens of the Parish concerned are required to notify the Property Team at Diocesan House if problems arise concerning any Glebe land in the Parish.

13 Ecumenical Relations

Canon B43 (Of Ecumenical Relations) sets out the duties that may be performed by non-Anglican Ministers during a Church of England service. Please consult the Area Dean or Archdeacon about any involvement of non-Anglican ministers, whether ordained or lay. It is not possible in law for a lay person, or a Minister of another denomination, to preside at a Church of England's service of Holy Communion or to officiate at a marriage.

14 Parish Archives

If it is intended to sort through and dispose of any Parish Archives (including recent correspondence files and administrative papers) Churchwardens must first consult the Archivist responsible for parish records in their area, who will be pleased to advise.

Cleveland Archdeaconry

North Yorkshire County Records Office,
County Hall,
Northallerton
DL7 8AD
☎ 01609 777585

or

Teesside Archives
Exchange House
6 Marton Road
Middlesbrough
TS1 1DB
☎ 01642 248321

East Riding Archdeaconry

The Treasure House
Champney Road
Beverley
HU17 9BA
☎ 01482 392790

York Archdeaconry:

The Borthwick Institute
University of York
Heslington
York
YO10 5DD
☎ 01904 321166

Useful contacts - “Who can I speak to about.....

Annual Parochial Church Meetings

Information and forms for Annual Parochial Church Meetings are available in the Help for PCCs section of the Diocesan Website. If you have any questions, contact the Diocesan Office on 01904 699500 or office@yorkdiocese.org.

Access for people with disabilities

If you want to make your church a more welcoming and accessible place for people with disabilities, contact Church Buildings Adviser Keith Halliday on 01904 699523 or keith.halliday@yorkdiocese.org.

Child protection

If you have any questions or worries about child protection, first contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team on 01904 699524 or safeguarding@yorkdiocese.org.

You can download the Diocesan Safeguarding policy at www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/safeguarding.

If you work or volunteer with children or vulnerable adults in your church, you will need to have a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check – contact Becci Leckenby at Bishopthorpe Palace on 01904 707021 or becci.leckenby@archbishopofyork.org.

Children and Youth

If you'd like some ideas and help in working with children and young people, contact Children's and Young People's Adviser Carolyn Edwards on 01904 699545 or carolyn.edwards@yorkdiocese.org.

Churches and churchyards

If you have any questions about your church building or its contents, contact Keith Halliday, the Church Buildings Adviser on 01904 699523 or keith.halliday@yorkdiocese.org. A good website to visit is www.churchcare.co.uk. Remember, you need permission to change anything to your church fabric, fittings or furnishings!

Copyright and licences

If you reproduce song words, photocopy, play live or recorded music, or show clips of films in your church, you may need a licence, to ensure you are not breaking the law. Christian Copyright Licensing International can help you work out what licences you may need, and explain copyright law – contact them on 01323 417711 or info@ccli.co.uk.

Directory

The Diocesan Online Directory lists all the clergy, staff and officers of the parishes, deaneries, archdeaconries and central structures of the Diocese. Access it at www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/directory.

Grants

The Archbishop's Mission Fund provides seed corn funding for mission projects across a parish or deanery. See www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/amf. For more information on other sources of funding for churches, www.parishresources.org.uk/funding.htm.

Legal matters

If you have any questions about legal matters, contact the Diocesan Registry on 01904 623487 or registryork@luptonfawcett.law. There is a list of frequently asked questions on their website: www.luptonfawcett.com/sectors/ecclesiastical/diocesan-registry-york as well as on the Diocesan website.

Mediation

In parish and work situations there are occasions when relationships sour. When conflict seems to be going beyond what can be settled between two parties then it can be helpful to get an impartial third party to help those involved to work out an agreement. Contact the Revd Andrew De Smet, Diocesan Co-ordinator and Advisor in Pastoral Care, on 07583 279459 or andrewdesmet@btinternet.com

Money matters

If you have any questions about money, whether it's the format of your accounts or problems with the parish share, contact Kathryn Rose, Finance Director on 01904 699537 or kathryn.rose@yorkdiocese.org. Also, visit www.parishresources.org.uk for everything from stewardship to finding funding.

Parish boundaries

If you want to find the exact boundaries for your parish, visit A Church Near You at www.achurchnearyou.com.

Parish buildings and land

If you have any questions about buildings or land owned by the PCC, contact Bevil Edwards, the Glebe, Property and Trusts Manager, on 01904 699536 or bevil.edwards@yorkdiocese.org

Pastoral reorganisation

Pastoral reorganisation is the name given to the process by which changes are made to the arrangement of parishes and deaneries to ensure that the resources available are used to give the most appropriate pastoral care. If you have any questions about this, contact your Archdeacon or Shirley Davies, Assistant Diocesan Secretary, on 01904 699500 or shirley.davies@yorkdiocese.org.

Publicity and the press

If you want help publicising an event or news story, whether it's in the local press or in a Diocesan publication, contact the Diocesan Communications Team of Martin Sheppard and Lorna Heatley on 01904 699530 or comms@yorkdiocese.org. They can help if you've got a crisis and you're worried it will hit the press, and can give advice about websites, social media, data protection and parish magazines.

Schools and education

If you want to work more closely with a school, college or university in your parish or benefice, whether it's one of our 127 church schools or not, contact Anita Ranyell, Education Department Administrator, on 01904 699511 or anita.ranyell@yorkdiocese.org.

Synod

If you have any questions about Diocesan or General Synod, contact Shirley Davies, Assistant Diocesan Secretary, on 01904 699500 or shirley.davies@yorkdiocese.org. If your question is about Deanery Synod, try your Area Dean.

Training

If you'd like help and training for your role, contact the Training Team on 01904 699504 or training@yorkdiocese.org.

Websites

Your church has a page on A Church Near You – make sure it's up to date and correct at www.achurchnearyou.com. If you'd like help creating a website, contact contact contact the Diocesan Communications Team of Martin Sheppard and Lorna Heatley on 01904 699530 or comms@yorkdiocese.org.

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