

## THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE

### *At Your Service*

This is a new edition of the Parsonage Hand Book, which we hope you will find helpful.

The first concern of the Property Committee is the security, comfort and welfare of those who live in the Vicarages, Rectories, Curates and Staff houses of the Diocese. The committee is also concerned that all work is ecologically sound and within the bounds of good stewardship.

We have introduced Evaluation Sheets for all major repairs and improvements to the houses and we urge you to fill them in on the completion of the job so that we can monitor the quality of the work undertaken and efficiency of the firms used.

To help the Department help you, please inform us immediately of repairs and problems so that as little time as possible is wasted in finding solutions and small jobs do not become big ones.

If you have any comments or observations to improve the service we offer, then please write to: The Property Secretary, at Church House.

Chairman  
January 2006

**When moving house, please leave this book in a prominent position in the study for the sequestrators and your successor.**

## **MANCHESTER DIOCESAN PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This guide is to inform clergy, their families, churchwardens, parochial church councils and architects, of the Parsonages' procedures in the Diocese of Manchester. It explains the legal position and the responsibilities of the incumbent in respect of the parsonages house.

It is the wish of the Diocesan Property Committee to co-operate with incumbents in all matters which concern parsonages so that, within the resources available, parsonages may be fit places for living and working.

**IN ALL MATTERS CONCERNING PARSONAGE HOUSES, THE FIRST STEP IS TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION WITH THE SECRETARY TO THE COMMITTEE AT DIOCESAN CHURCH HOUSE, 90 DEANSGATE, MANCHESTER, M3 2GH – TELEPHONE 0161 828 1400.**

### **Synopsis**

Incumbents of parishes occupy their houses as 'representative occupiers'. Their responsibilities are those of reasonable tenants. The 'Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972' lays down the diocesan responsibility to be that equivalent to a landlord under the Rent Acts.

**The Diocese is responsible for structural repairs and exterior decorations.**

**The incumbent is responsible for non-structural repairs and internal decoration.**

### **Taxation**

The Chief Accountant of the Church Commissioners advises incumbents:-

If you are living in tied accommodation (eg. a vicarage) you will not be taxed on your use of the house as you will continue to be a representative occupier. However, you will become subject to a tax on services provided at the house. Examples are:-

1. Payments otherwise made tax free in respect of heating, lighting and cleaning.
2. Internal repairs that are not structural and internal decorations of your house, that are paid for by the Church, but would have been your responsibility had you been renting a house.

If you require clarification of any of the above, please contact the Financial Secretary at the Diocesan Office.

## **Property Committee**

The activities of the Property Committee are governed by the Parsonages Measure 1938 and 1974, the Repair of Benefice Building Measure 1972, the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2005, and the Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976. Under the Manchester Diocesan Scheme, the Diocesan Board of Finance is the Parsonages Board and the Board's functions are delegated to the Property Committee.

## **Relationships**

The Property Committee works with many interested parties.

### **1. Clergy**

Though most clergy 'own' the house by virtue of their office, they and their families are, in fact, 'custodians' of the house for themselves and future incumbents. They are required to take reasonable care of their homes. They have a responsibility under the Repair of Benefice Buildings measure for routine maintenance, such as the clearing of gutters/sweeping chimneys/internal decorations/garden upkeep/small household repairs.

Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972

13(1) The incumbent shall have duty to take proper care of a parsonage house, being the duty equivalent of that of a tenant to use premises in a tenant like manner

13(3) The incumbent shall notify the Board of any repairs to a parsonage house, appearing to him 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, shall do so without delay.

Clergy should contact the Diocesan property office if problems arise with their houses or if there are factors that they think should be brought to the attention of the Committee.

Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972

23 The incumbent of a benefice shall keep the Board informed of matters affecting buildings and land belonging to the benefice other than churches and in particular of matters arising from any notice given to him by a Government Department, Local or Public Authority, Public Utility Undertakers or in the case of property held on a lease or tenancy, the landlord of the property and the Board shall, at the request of the incumbent, advise on or undertake negotiations in respect of any such matters.

***Non-urgent expenditure should not be incurred without the Committee's prior approval.***

## **Neglect of Houses**

Should the Committee feel that occupiers have not taken reasonable care of their house, it may decide to charge them the cost of works consequent upon their failing to do so.

This also relates to internal decorations (see page 8)

Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972

13(4) Where the report of the Diocesan Building Officer, whether under section 4 or section 8 of this measure, specifies any repairs to a parsonage house as necessary by reason of damage caused or aggravated by any deliberate act of the incumbent or a previous incumbent or any default in his duties under this section, the Board may, on completion of the repairs, by notice require the incumbent concerned or his personal representative to pay to them the whole or part of the cost certified by the Diocesan Building Officer to be attributable to the said act of default and, if the notice is not complied with, the Board may take proceedings for the enforcement thereof.

## **2. Parochial Church Councils**

Parochial Church Councils are asked to assist their clergy in the care of the house. Help with the smaller jobs can be extremely valuable. During a vacancy, there will be an added responsibility to look after the house and churchwardens, as sequestrators, will usually be expected to hold the keys. The advice and comments of the Parochial Church Council are always welcome (see page 6 ‘Vacancies’)

## **3. The Church Commissioners**

Their agreement is sometimes required prior to the purchase, building or sale of parsonage houses, they also offer advice and guidance on a variety of housing topics.

## **4. The Patron**

The Patron is consulted about proposals to buy, build, improve or sell a parsonage house and/or its grounds, or the provision of an alternative site.

## **Provision and Disposal of Houses**

The Committee has an on-going programme for the replacement of unsuitable houses, and the provision of houses to meet new pastoral needs, within the limits of available finance. The Property Committee, acting on behalf of incumbents, serves notice on the Parochial Church Council and the Patron and obtains, if necessary, the approval of the Church Commissioners. Attention is drawn to the **suggested** specification as set out in the book “Parsonages – A Design Guide” published by the Church Commissioners and known generally as the “Green Guide”. The Property Committee endeavours to meet the Church Commissioners **suggested** standards in its new build houses, but this is conditioned to some extent by funds available and variations agreed by the Committee. Full information on the current suggested standard for parsonage houses in the Diocese of Manchester is available from the Property Secretary.

The cost of new houses (whether built or purchased) is found from the sale proceeds of former parsonage houses. The funding of any project is subject to the approval of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

The replacement programme is subject to revision from time to time and updated information can be obtained from the Property Secretary.

## **Repairs and Maintenance**

Houses are inspected every five years. The surveyor reports to the Property Committee and a copy of his report is sent to the Incumbent. Clergy are asked to share the contents of the quinquennial report with the Parochial Church Council. Comments are invited on the report, specification and improvement (if any). If no comments are received in writing within four weeks, the Diocesan Office will put the work in hand.

The Building Officer will try to make a supervisory visit to the site while work is in progress. Problems or concerns should be reported to him to allow him to relay these to the contractors.

## **Interim Repairs and maintenance**

Clergy, assisted by the parochial Church Council, have an ongoing responsibility to look after the house, and to keep it in good order between Quinquennial inspections. Ideally, small jobs (ie changing tap washers etc) should be undertaken or arranged on a DIY basis. This should keep the house in good order between inspections.

If it is necessary to use a ladder to gain access for repairs (eg cleaning gutters or similar), care should be taken not to lean ladders against plastic guttering as this may cause the guttering to break.

If it is thought necessary for repairs to be carried out professionally, contact the Diocesan Office. If such work is likely to assume significant proportions the Buildings Officer will dispatch a contractor or visit and if necessary make a report for the Committee's consideration. If damage occurs maliciously, accidentally or by storm then it may be possible to make an insurance claim. The procedure for this is set out on page 7.

## **Improvements**

Improvements are usually carried out in conjunction with Quinquennial and interregnum repairs.

Work is subject to the availability of funds and the Committee being satisfied that works are justified. The Committee, working within its financial constraints, endeavours to improve older parsonages to the current standard, although in some houses this is not physically practicable.

Any improvement work put in hand without prior approval of the committee will not be funded.

## **Signing off Building Works**

The Building Officer has been instructed that when quinquennial/interregnum works are completed he should, where ever possible, inspect the same in the company of the incumbent and the contractor. The responsibility remains with the Buildings Officer to ensure that the work is carried out to the standard required and in line with the costs being paid, though the incumbent can point out to the Building Officer areas of work felt to be sub-standard.

In cases of dispute, the Property Secretary will carry out an inspection of the disputed work and make a decision. If this is not conclusive the final arbitrator would be for the Secretary to call out members of the Committee to view and comment.

After major works, the Property Secretary will send out a quality control form for completion. This will assist the Committee in monitoring the work of the contractors etc.

## **Statutory Notices**

If a Statutory Notice is served upon an Incumbent (eg. in respect of road improvement, tree preservation order, planning applications, etc), the Property Secretary should be informed without delay.

## **Maintenance of Central Heating Boilers and Gas Fires**

The Committee has arranged to provide an annual maintenance contract for all gas and oil fired central heating systems in parsonage houses at the cost to the Diocese. If there is a problem with the central heating the first call should be to the maintenance contractor under the terms of the agreement. A Landlord's Gas Safety Certificate will be issued by the contractor after the annual maintenance visit.

The contract also covers all gas fires in parsonage houses. Any problem with a gas fire should be referred to the maintenance contractor. Any repair will be on a quoted basis and any quotation should be sent to the Property Secretary for advice prior to acceptance.

***Any work undertaken by other contractors on gas fired central heating systems or gas fires without the prior approval of the Property Committee Secretary must be paid for locally.***

If there are any queries in respect of maintenance contracts, please contact the Secretary at the Diocesan Office.

## Vacancies

When a house is vacated the Secretary will carry out an inspection to view its condition. The Church wardens, Area Dean and/or the Chairman of the Property Committee may also be in attendance.

When vacating a parsonage, the Incumbent should ensure it is left in a clean and tidy condition. All rubbish should be disposed of, cupboards cleaned, floors swept and gardens tidied. When leaving, ask yourself, 'would I like to move into this house in this condition?' If the answer is no, chances are no-one else will.

Before leaving, occupiers should arrange for the gas, electricity and water meters to be read, the telephone company to be informed and all accounts forwarded to their new address. ***NONE of these services should be disconnected as they can involve reconnection charges and delays in reconnecting, especially the telephone.***

It may be beneficial to have the telephone account in the name of the Parochial Church Council (see page 10)

During a vacancy the churchwardens are responsible, with the assistance of the property department, for the security and condition of the house. Advice on these matters should be obtained from the Secretary before the commencement of the interregnum.

Empty houses are prone to vandal attack. The PCC is asked to do all it can to protect them by keeping up an appearance of habitation (eg by having curtains at windows and lights on time switches), by organising regular visits and advising the Police. As a last resort the Committee will consider boarding up, but this can be counter productive, as it advertises the fact that the house is empty. In areas of greater risk 'boarding up' will be done as a matter of course.

On vacating, all the house keys are to be left with the Churchwardens and the Property Secretary at the Diocesan Office notified of the name, address and telephone number of the key holder. Gas, electricity and other services should be turned off at the mains, unless required but ***not*** disconnected by the Boards who supply these services. They may be required again at short notice.

If the central heating is not to be used, the water supply should be turned off and drained down by a reputable plumber. Contact the property office for advice on draining down.

During the vacancy the PCC should ensure the gardens are kept tidy and the grass trimmed. Not only does this deter vandals it makes it much more attractive to prospective incumbents

It should be noted that if a house is vacant for more than thirty days, the insurance cover is reduced.

## Letting a Parsonage House

There are circumstances when it may be necessary or expedient for someone else to occupy the whole or part of a parsonage house. There are two legal alternatives depending on the

circumstances of each individual case, but note that incumbents cannot enter into agreements that run beyond the term of their incumbency.

The first alternative (where the incumbent is sharing possession) is to grant a licence of occupation where the occupier is to become in effect a lodger. It is essential for this type of agreement that the occupier shares some part of the accommodation.

The second alternative is to grant a tenancy. In that case the tenant is entitled as a right to exclusive possession of either the whole of the parsonage house, or that part of it to which the tenancy relates. Any tenancy granted should be an assured shorthold tenancy and arranged through the Diocesan Registrar, as legal notices are required to be served before the lease is entered into. The Property Secretary can offer advice on the letting of Parsonages.

The parish pay the Council Tax for the incumbent. A 25% discount is available for single occupancy. Any lodgers will cancel this discount, and, therefore, they must pay the 25% of the council tax plus any rent agreed.

**Please contact the Property Secretary before and whilst considering entering into any agreement, or with queries about Council Tax.**

***No persons are to take up residence in a parsonage house during a vacancy without the written approval of the Committee.***

## **Insurance**

All parsonages for which the Property Committee has responsibility are insured under a comprehensive policy.

If the house suffers damage from thieves, vandals, storm or accident, then the Diocesan office should be notified as soon as possible. It is a condition of the insurance that if the damage was malicious, the local police are to be informed.

Depending on the nature of the damage it may be necessary to carry out emergency repairs. Where possible, the Property department should be contacted first.

In order to consider an insurance claim, the Insurers will require a clearly itemised written estimate, a brief description of how the damage occurred, the date of the occurrence, and, if appropriate, the name of the police station contacted. These details should be forwarded to the Property Secretary.

All insurance claims against the block policy must be made through the Property Department. All successful claims against the block policy are subject to an excess charge. For claims resulting from accidental damage the excess charge must be borne locally. Please note that claims for the loss or theft of house keys and the subsequent replacement of locks is to be claimed on the individual's household policies not on the building insurance

If other work is being carried out at the same time as insurance work, then care must be taken to obtain separate itemised estimates and accounts.

The Property Committee only insures the house not the *contents*. *Clergy* must make their own arrangements for the contents of the house. It should be noted that on a house expected to be vacant for more than thirty days, the insurance cover will be reduced.

It is a requirement of our policy that, during vacancies the house must be checked daily for damage and security.

## **Interior Redecoration**

Internal redecoration is the responsibility of the occupier.

1. Any redecoration needed as a direct consequence of properly authorised works will be undertaken by the Committee as an integral part of the work. Redecoration will only be to a basic standard. Expensive wallpapers etc will not be replaced unless others supply them at no cost to the Diocese.
2. If redecoration is required as a direct consequence of an insurable occurrence then the Diocesan Office should be consulted so that the possibility of meeting the cost of remedial redecoration through an insurance claim can be investigated.
3. The Committee wishes to encourage clergy to keep their houses reasonably decorated and to this end provides a decoration grant. For details, contact the secretary.
4. While the Property Committee has no wish to dictate internal colour schemes, nor has the power to do so, it does ask that loud and strong colours on woodwork and painted walls be avoided. Such colours are expensive to rectify and such costs are not the Board's responsibility.
5. Failure to keep the house in reasonable decorative order will be considered to be **NEGLECT** (see page 3)

For current details of 3 and 4 contact the Property Secretary.

## **Security**

The Committee will ensure that parsonages are made secure to a reasonable standard. This will be explicit in the design of new houses and in the Quinquennial/interregnum repairs. The Police advise that window locks to ground floor windows and five lever mortice locks to doors will deter most intruders. The Committee will not be perceptive in the design of alarm/security systems but will take advice locally on the security situation.

Where an alarm system is fitted the Diocese is not responsible for its maintenance, as the function of the alarm is to protect the contents of the house and that is the responsibility of the incumbent. It is recommended that Parishes take out a Maintenance Agreement with a NACOS registered Company.

## **Kitchen appliances**

The provision of a cooker is the responsibility of the incumbent. A cooker grant is available and details can be obtained from the Property Secretary.

The Diocese will provide connections for automatic washing machines and dishwashers. Tumble dryers need to be vented to open air, owners should supply the venting kit and the diocese will cut the relevant aperture for its fitting.

## **Water Rates or Water Charges**

The payment of these is the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council. Water Rates are not chargeable on empty houses. During interregnum, the Sequestrators should inform the Water Board and arrange a rebate if necessary.

## **Condensation**

Modern properties suffer more than most with the problem of condensation. The evidence for condensation is not always in having water running down the inside of the windows. Condensation can result in damaged decorations, mould growth on walls, rotting timber work and moulding clothes. In the main the problem is not caused by faulty building, but through incorrect heating and ventilation. Ventilation does not automatically mean heat loss. Comfort is a balance between humidity and temperature.

When double glazing is provided, the Committee recommends that permanent ventilation is included. Extractor fans are provided in kitchens, bathrooms and should be used.

The rectification of condensation damage can be very expensive and the Committee could view such damage as neglect on behalf of the occupier. (see 'Neglect' page 3)

## **PVCu Windows and Doors**

These fittings, while offering various advantages over softwood, do require a degree of care in their maintenance. PVCu windows and doors do not rot, warp or lose their colour in normal use. They can, however, be permanently damaged by carelessness and by using unsuitable cleaning materials.

Do not stand ladders directly against a PVCu windowsill. Do not use a blowtorch or any other very hot appliance near to the window. The glazed areas should be cleaned as normal glass. The PVCu section should be cleaned with a non-abrasive liquid cleaner. Do not clean with scouring powder, wire wool or bleach. Windows or doors must not be painted, nor should curtain fittings be fitted directly to the window frame.

## **Bathroom Fittings**

Modern baths and shower trays are usually manufactured from acrylic (a type of plastic). This material is very durable and colourfast. However, the high gloss finish to the bath can be permanently damaged by carelessness or by using unsuitable cleaning materials. Do not use scouring powder, wire wool or bleach agents to clean the bathroom fittings

## Garden

The ongoing maintenance of the garden and hedges is the responsibility of the incumbent. Should the garden become unkempt and overgrown, this will be treated as 'neglect' and any costs of rectification will be charged to the outgoing incumbent (see 'Neglect' page 3).

## Trees

The cutting down or lopping of trees, which are within the parsonage grounds, is the responsibility of the Incumbent. However, the Committee is conscious of the cost involved in 'tree work' and will try, within budgetary restrictions, to fund expensive works.

It should be noted that trees may be listed for preservation or in a conservation area, in this case Local Authority's consent is required before any tree work is undertaken. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the prosecution of the Incumbent.

New trees should not be planted near to the parsonage house. Poorly sited trees can cause damage to the structure of the property, the drains or boundary walls/fences. Remember the crown of the tree roughly equates to the size of its root system.

Care must be taken when removing trees. Some trees, in certain soils, if removed too quickly, can cause structural damage by ground heave.

Advice on tree work is available from the Diocesan Arboriculturalist via the property office.

## Telephone

The Diocese will provide telephone connection to the house. **At the time of the initial installation** the Diocese will provide telephone points as follows: one in the study, one elsewhere on the ground floor and the third one at the discretion of the Incumbent.

Rental and other charges are the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council and/or the Incumbent, together with costs for the installation of any additional telephone equipment.

During a vacancy, the Parochial Church Council pays the telephone account until a new appointment is made. This can be refunded via the sequestration account.

*If possible* the Parochial Church Council should take the telephone in its own name, thus avoiding difficulties at vacancies. The Incumbent's name should, however, be inserted in the Directory.

## TV Satellite Dishes

These devices should only be fitted to a property on the clear understanding that when the property is vacated the device is removed and all making good is undertaken to the Board's satisfaction and at the occupier's expense. The same applies for specialist radio antenna. Any damage caused to a property as a consequence of fitting such devices is the responsibility of the occupier.

## **Health and Safety at Work**

All contractors working for the Parsonages board do so within the current Health and Safety at Work regulations. Some works to property will involve the use of chemicals (eg dry rot treatment). *If any one occupying the property is known to suffer from breathing problems, allergies or the like, it should be communicated to the contractor before work commences. The Property Secretary should be contacted for advice on any Health and Safety at Work matters.*

## **Smoke Detectors**

Incumbents are recommended to fit smoke detectors in their houses and check them regularly.

## **General**

The Committee reserves the right to delay or bring forward a quinquennial inspection. Houses that are considered unsuitable and on the current list for replacement will not normally qualify for any improvement works.

## **FORMER CHURCH PROPERTY**

If there is former church property in the parish, or more particularly an old parsonage, then the Incumbent is requested to keep a watchful eye over developments at that property or within its grounds. Many sales of former church property include provisions relating to the requirement that any new owner must seek the approval of church authorities for any change of use and/or alterations to such property.

Should an Incumbent notice any change or extensions, or indeed notices posted in respect of planning applications, then the Diocesan Office should be notified straight away.

## HOUSING FOR ASSISTANT CURATES

*The diocese is responsible, in partnership with parishes, for the housing of assistant curates.*

*It is highly desirable that all stipendiary clergy should reside in the parishes where they serve, but this aspiration must be considered with good stewardship of the diocese's resources. If there is existing provision within a parish for the housing of assistant staff, it is unlikely that additional funding could be available for the purchase of alternative accommodation. If the diocese owns suitable available property in a nearby parish it is likely that this will be the preferred option for assistant curates rather than the purchase or rental of a different property.*

The **Board of Finance** will accept responsibility for:

- The provision of a suitable property or
- The payment of a grant to parishes which own suitable assistant staff housing. Such a grant will be at the level of the average cost of similar rental accommodation within the parish.

The **Board of Finance** will meet or reimburse the PCC the council tax payment for the person concerned and his/her immediate family and the water rates.

The **parish** concerned will remain responsible for the maintenance of their own properties.

### *Procedure to be followed when the placement of deacons is being considered*

1. When the DDO discusses a deacon with a training incumbent he will give a copy of these notes to the incumbent, Church Wardens and subsequently to the prospective deacon.
2. The incumbent will be asked by the DDO whether or not assistant staff accommodation is already available and if it is considered suitable in terms of the size of the ordinand's family.
3. At the initial meeting between the incumbent and prospective curate the incumbent will assure the prospective curate that adequate housing will be provided without specifying particular properties.
4. If the initial meeting between incumbent and ordinand indicates there is the possibility of a Title being served, the incumbent is asked to inform the DDO, the Archdeacon, **and the Property Secretary regarding housing**. Geoff Hutchinson can be contacted at Church House, telephone 0161 828 1417.
5. If the parish already owns a property, the Property Secretary will arrange to visit and discuss with the incumbent the suitability of the accommodation for the family of the prospective curate. This visit may include the Archdeacon if he is not familiar with the property.
6. In the event that no suitable accommodation currently exists within the parish the use of a property in a nearby parish (a parsonage or other housing) will be made available.
7. Where no such property exists in a neighbouring parish the Property Secretary will:

- Identify an appropriate property.
  - Discuss the option of rented accommodation.
  - Discuss the purchase of a property with the aid of a Value Linked Loan.  
(The Incumbent and PCC may be asked to identify properties considered suitable within the given price ranges and to inform the Property Secretary as soon as possible).
8. The Property Secretary and Training Incumbent will inspect the property and if it is considered to be suitable the ordinand will be invited to view. If there is then a dispute regarding suitability the Archdeacon will be asked to undertake a visit.
  9. Once suitable accommodation is identified, the following steps are to be taken:
    - *Rented Property:* The Property Secretary will arrange for the tenancy agreement to be entered into by the Board of Finance.
    - *Property to be Purchased:* The Property Secretary will arrange for the purchase to be undertaken.
  10. If the accommodation is considered unsuitable then the process of identifying a suitable property begins again.
  11. The Incumbent discusses with the ordinand any decorations considered necessary and, if appropriate, liaise with the Property Secretary regarding any work, which was identified in previous visits as necessary prior to occupation.

#### Criteria for Suitability

- The size of the property in terms of the deacon's family.
- In the case of single clergy, the availability of a 'spare room' for guests.
- Adequate study facilities.
- Adequate kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- The security of the property in terms of location and design.
- The condition of the property in terms of location and design.
- The condition of the property in terms of immediate and ongoing repairs.
- The availability of the property in relation to the ordination date; careful planning must ensure that the house is not vacant for too long prior to occupation, or too 'last-minute' for peace of mind!
- The location of the property in relation to the benefice in which the Title will be served.

Note – Whilst it is desirable to provide a garage and garden space this is not always feasible.

#### **Vacation of rented properties**

Assistant curates living in rented properties are to ensure they give their landlord the relevant notice as per the tenancy agreement (normally 4 weeks) prior to vacating their house. The house must be left in a clean and tidy condition.

It is usual for a deposit to be paid on signing the tenancy. Any forfeiture of the deposit is the responsibility of the tenant, not the Diocese.

#### **Training Incumbents must not enter into any agreement with prospective curates in respect of housing without obtaining the prior agreement of the Property Secretary and Archdeacon.**