

Letting of Parsonages

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

The Property Secretary may, with the co-operation of the PCC arrange tenants to occupy the house during the vacancy. For more information on the letting of parsonage houses, contact the Property Secretary.

Insurance

All parsonages for which the Property Committee has responsibility are insured under a comprehensive policy. If a house suffers damage from thieves, vandals, storm or accident, then the Property Department are to 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, a crime number obtained and forwarded to the Property Office. The Property Committee only insures the building not the contents, therefore, **any parish property within the vacant house should be covered on the parish insurance policy.**

Neglect of Houses

Should the Property Department feel that those responsible have not taken reasonable care of the house they may decide to charge them for the cost of works consequent upon this failing. The Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure covers such action if it is felt necessary.

Repair of Benefice Measure 1972 extract:

when the report of a diocesan surveyor, whether under section 4 or section 7 of this Measure, specifies any repair 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 them the whole or part of the cost certified by the diocesan surveyor to be attributable to the said act or default and, if the notice is not complied with, the Board may take proceedings for the enforcement thereof.

If you have any questions please contact the Property Department:

Property Secretary (Geoff Hutchinson)

Diocesan Office

4th floor, Church House

90 Deansgate

Manchester

M3 2GH

Tel: 0161 828 1417

Fax 0161 833 1484

Email: geoffhutchinson@manchester.anglican.org

For more information visit the Property pages on the Diocese of Manchester's website:

www.manchester.anglican.org

Vacancies and Parsonage Houses: Guidance for parishes



General Vacancy Procedures

*These notes should be read in conjunction with the **Parsonage Handbook 2006 and Interregna Notes to Sequestrators**, issued by the Diocesan Registrar.*

The notes are prepared to offer guidance to churchwardens and departing incumbents.

By following the notes, the committee will be greatly assisted in its work.

If you need any further advice or assistance, please contact the Property Secretary.

It is essential that the Property Secretary is contacted as soon as a move date is known.

Before leaving a parsonage house the clergy person is to ensure that the gas, electricity and water meters are read, the telephone and other media suppliers informed and arrange for the final accounts forwarded to their new address. None of the utilities or telephone should be disconnected as they involve reconnection charges and inconvenient delays.

The churchwardens should also read the meters on the first day of the vacancy and ensure that future bills are forwarded to the PCC for payment.

When vacating a parsonage, the Clergy person should ensure that it is left in a clean and tidy condition. All rubbish is to be disposed of, cupboards emptied and cleaned, floors swept, garden tidied and grass cut.

The house keys are to be left with the churchwardens.

When the house is vacated the Property Secretary, along with the churchwardens will carry out an inspection to view its condition. The Area Dean and/or Chairman of the Property Committee may also attend.

During a vacancy the churchwardens are responsible, with the assistance of the Property Department, for the security and condition of the house. Empty houses are prone to vandal attack.

The PCC is asked to do all it can to protect a house by ensuring all locks; bolts and other protective devices are put in operation. They are asked to keep up an appearance of habitation (e.g. having curtains at windows and lights on time switches) and advising the police of the vacancy. The garden should be kept tidy and free from litter to avoid the appearance of being unoccupied.

The PCC should also arrange for the house is visited, if possible, on a daily basis, but at leased twice a week to check its security and clear mail.

As a last resort the committee will consider boarding up the property, however, this can be counter-productive as it advertises the fact that the house is empty. Further advice on these matters can be obtained from the Property Secretary.

During the vacancy the Board of Finance will reimburse the parish for a reasonable amount of gas, electricity, telephone and charges for heating and maintaining the house during the period October to March, providing that the following control settings are used:

- **Boiler thermostat set at 140o Fahrenheit (60o Centigrade).**
- **The room thermostat set at 45o Fahrenheit (7o Centigrade).**
- **The time clock set to operate from 02:00 to 05:00 and 20:00 to 22:00.**

Arrangements are to be made for someone to pay regular visits to ensure the boiler is working (and if oil fired to check the oil levels).

The above is only to be undertaken when it is known that the boiler is protected by a frost-stat. **If the boiler is not protected or it is expected to be a prolonged vacancy, the whole system must be drained together with the domestic water system and the rising main turned off.** In addition the gas should be turned off at the meter (do not have it disconnected) and circuit breakers that are not required switched off. Please note that before relighting the boiler you should ensure that the system has been refilled and tested.

Financial Matters

Once the parsonage is vacated, unfurnished and being held vacant for a minister of religion it is exempt from council tax charges. **The local authority is to be informed accordingly.**

Once the house is vacant and unfurnished it is exempt from the payment of water rates and **United Utilities should be informed accordingly.**

Gas, electricity and telephone bills should be paid by the parish and reasonable bills can be reclaimed the Board of Finance using the claim forms provided.