

YOUR ARCHDEACON'S PARISH VISITATION INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

In this Diocese Archdeacons' Parish Visitations take place approximately every 5 years. These may be done by the Archdeacon and/or the Area Dean, with the support of the Deanery Lay Chair.

The visitation has two purposes:

- to ensure that everything is in good order and that the legal requirements are being properly met
- to give an opportunity for you to reflect on the life, mission and ministry of your parish and to share something of that with your Archdeacon or Area Dean.

Whether Archdeacon or Area Dean, we come to advise, support and encourage the parish, not to find fault!

STEPS IN THE PROCESS

1. The Archdeacon will write to the parish at the beginning of the calendar year if they are to receive a Visitation in the next 12 months.
2. The Archdeacon and/or Area Dean will arrange a suitable date with the parish priest, as far ahead as possible.
3. About six weeks before the date of the Visitation, the 'Information and Guidance' is sent to the parish priest from the Archdeacon or Area Dean's office, depending on who is leading on the Visitation.
4. The parish should begin to prepare for the Visitation
 - by ensuring that **documents, registers, policies etc.** are available and up to date, and that items which should be on public display are so.
 - by completing the **Parish Information Form** and returning it to the Archdeacon or Area Dean at least two weeks before the date of the visitation. Clergy and churchwardens should involve others such as the Treasurer, PCC Secretary, Gift Aid Secretary, Leadership Team etc in completing this form
 - by forwarding to the Archdeacon or Area Dean with the Parish Information Form a copy of the latest **Mission Action Plan, PCC Annual Report and Financial Statements**, and any other documents that you feel might be useful
 - Informing the wider congregation about the visitation and its purpose
5. The Archdeacon/Area Dean, with the Deanery Lay Chair wherever possible, carry out the Visitation, meeting with the clergy, churchwardens and treasurer, and carrying out the inspections (see below). Normally about three hours should be allowed, with extra time if there is more than one church building in the parish.
6. The Archdeacon/Area Dean or Lay Chair will prepare their report based on the information provided and the discussions on the day of the Visitation.
7. The Archdeacon may then wish to discuss the report with the PCC, and will arrange this with the parish priest. S/he might also welcome the opportunity to join the congregation in worship at a Sunday service and preach.

8. Copies of the final visitation report are sent to the Parish Priest, PCC Secretary and Churchwardens as well as to the Suffragan Bishop. The Archdeacon, Area Dean and the Deanery Lay Chair will also keep copies.

We hope the visitation report will provide encouragement as well as helping the PCC to identify some jobs to do and to set some of its objectives

INSPECTIONS

You should be prepared for the Archdeacon, Area Dean and Lay Chair to cover the following areas:

The church building

The person leading on the Visitation will have their own copy of your latest **Architect's Quinquennial Inspection Report**, but you should make sure that your copy is available on the day of the visitation.

We will want to look around the Church, both outside and inside, and consider the state of the building with reference to the Quinquennial Inspection Report.

Please be prepared to discuss

- the general condition of the building, and any particular problems being experienced at the time
- progress made on the recommendations in the QI report
- security, including any recent break-ins or thefts (including metal theft)
- insurance cover
- access to the building for those with disabilities
- health and safety (see below)
- procedures for the handling and banking of money
- procedures in relation to GDPR

The contents of the church

These should be listed in the parish inventory (see below). We will want to check that valuable items such as the silverware is present, and kept securely. There should be photographs of all valuable silverware and other plate, stained glass, antique furniture etc., with copies kept at a separate location.

Documents and Registers that should be kept in the church safe

The following should be kept securely in the safe. On the day of the visitation it is helpful if they could be laid out on a table just beforehand. You may wish to use this as a checklist:

(Those marked * = *if applicable*)

Important Documents	
The Terrier and Inventory	
The Log Book	
Faculty Certificates	
Marriage Certificate book	

Registers (including any completed but not yet deposited in the Diocesan Archive)	
Marriage Registers	
Banns of Marriage Register	
Baptism Register	
Confirmation Register	
Register of children admitted to Holy Communion before confirmation*	
Burial Register (and churchyard plan)*	
Register of Burial of Cremated Remains (and churchyard plan)*	
Service Register	
Receipt for registers (and other documents) deposited in the Diocesan Archive	

Other Documents that should be available

Again, please would you lay these out on a table beforehand:

(Those marked * = *if applicable*)

Policies	
Safe Church Policy	
Child Protection Policy	
Vulnerable Adults' Policy	
Health and Safety Policy	
Fire Risk Assessment	
Other Documents	
PCC Minute Book	
APCM Minute Book	
Electoral Roll	
Electrical Inspection Certificate	
Lightning Conductor Test Certificate*	
Central Heating Boiler Service Certificate	
Fire Extinguisher Service Certificate	
Contracts of Employment*	
Mission Action Plan	

Items that should be displayed on a public notice board inside the church

(Those marked * = *if applicable*)

Safe Church Policy	
Child Protection Policy (as on p.17 – <i>Safeguarding Children, Handbook of Policy and Procedures 2012</i>)	
Employer's Liability Insurance Certificate	
Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) Licence*	
Certificate of Authorisation of Eucharistic Assistants	
Table of Fees (including local 'optional extras')	

The Churchyard and Boundaries

They will want to check the general maintenance, care and safety of the grounds to ensure that the Churchyard Regulations are being followed, including the requirement to test the safety of memorials every six months.

The Church Hall (if applicable)

They will want to look round any Hall/Community Centre, both outside and inside, and consider the condition of the building

As with the Church building, please be prepared to discuss

- the fabric and general state of the building
- any work that needs doing and its costs
- access to the building for those with disabilities
- security and insurance
- health and safety

Parsonage House (if applicable)

They will not wish to visit the house, but want to be assured that it is in a good state of repair and that it adequately meets the needs of its occupant and family. A conversation about general fuel costs and energy efficiency would be helpful.

Other Properties

They will want to know of any other properties for which the parish has some responsibility, such as a curate's house, church school etc.

Vision, Mission and Ministry

Please fill in the separate Parish Information Form to give the Archdeacon/Area Dean and Lay Chair an overview of your parish's life and witness. We suggest that this is done by the Standing Committee and used as an opportunity to reflect on how well your parish is doing in relation to the three elements of our Diocesan Vision: Growing Congregations, Increasing Giving and Serving our Communities.

We would also welcome your thoughts about the future, particularly in relation to the Deanery Plan, emerging Mission Clusters/Units and the opportunities that are available for the parish's ongoing mission.

It is unlikely that any parish will have everything perfectly in place and up to date. Please don't be anxious about that. Your Archdeacon/Area Dean is there to support and advise you on how to rectify any omissions, in order of priority.

YOUR ARCHDEACON'S OR AREA DEAN'S PARISH VISITATION REFERENCE NOTES

These notes contain some information about items that the Archdeacon or Area Dean will be inspecting during your visitation. For further information contact the Archdeacon/Area Dean directly.

Items are listed in alphabetical order. An asterisk indicates 'where applicable'.*

APCM Minute Book

This should be separate from the PCC Minute Book (see below), but kept in a similar format. Electronic copies of PCC minutes are acceptable. However, signed hard copies should be kept securely and permanently and be readily available for inspection.

Baptism Register

This should be kept up to date and full names used. Any registers that are over 100 years old, or whose first entry is over 150 years old should be deposited in the Diocesan Archive unless the Bishop's permission is given for it to be retained in the parish. New register books can be purchased on line from SPCK Publishing and elsewhere.

Burial Register*

This is for full burials in the churchyard only and needs to be kept fully up to date. It should refer to the position of the grave on the churchyard plan. A separate register for burial of cremated remains is required. Permanent black ink should be used for entries.

Central Heating Boiler Service Certificate

Central heating system boilers should be serviced annually and the certificate kept securely with other parish documents.

Certificate of Authorisation of Eucharistic Assistants

The incumbent and PCC nominate those who may assist with the administration of Holy Communion and the Bishop affirms their role in a letter to the parish including a list of their names, which should be on public display. Authorisation is for a period of four years after which they will need to be renewed. Authorisations in one archdeaconry in turn expire each year.

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

The parish must have a Policy Statement on Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk. <https://www.manchester.anglican.org/search/?q=safeguarding+policy>. A PCC – appointed Safeguarding Co-ordinator should be appointed, as described in the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy 2017. The completed policy, including the name of the Co-ordinator

should be displayed clearly on an internal church noticeboard. The Policy Statement on Safeguarding Children and Young People is one of the component policies of the **Safe Church Policy**. As with all policies, it should be communicated effectively, implemented carefully and reviewed annually at the APCM.

Safe Church Policy

The Safe Church Policy provides parishes with a clear and workable policy, which acknowledges and affirms the good practices already evident in many places, ensures consistent good practice, and also raises awareness of our collective responsibility to be sensitive to the needs of children and adults both within the church community and more widely in society. It is an 'umbrella' policy covering a number of areas including, Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, Health and Safety, Fire Risk, Recruitment. Once the policy is adopted by the PCC the front page of the model policy (on the Diocesan website) should be completed and posted on the internal church notice board. As with all policies, it should be communicated effectively, implemented carefully and reviewed regularly.

Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) Licences*

CCLI administers a number of licences that churches may require, including:

- the Church Copyright Licence
- the Music Reproduction Licence
- the Performing Rights Society (PRS) for Music Church Licence
- the Church Video Licence
- the Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL) Church Licence

You may need some or all of these, depending on your requirements, so you should check carefully on the CCLI website. It is no longer necessary to display the licence(s) but they should be kept securely with other church documents.

Confirmation Register

This records the details of candidates from the parish who are presented for confirmation by the bishop, *wherever the confirmation takes place*. The parish priest must ensure that it is signed by the bishop at the confirmation service.

Contracts of Employment*

Anyone employed by the PCC should have a contract of employment. The Diocesan HR Manager, Alan Brown, can advise on what form these should take. The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer can advise on Safer Recruitment. Permanent black ink should be used for entries.

Electoral Roll

Rules for the preparation of the Electoral Roll by the Electoral Roll Officer are found in the Church Representation Rules (2017) . When the roll is displayed for the required period there is no need to include personal details including addresses, but the master copy should include all the information on the application form, and a note of whether a member is resident or non-resident. Previous copies of the Electoral Roll should be retained as far back as six years before the last revision.

Electrical Inspection Certificate

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 require that all electrical systems shall be of such design, construction and installation as to prevent danger. The Church Buildings Council recommends that fixed installations should be inspected and tested at five-yearly intervals. This would normally be shortly before the Quinquennial inspection of the building and should be done by a NICEIC accredited professional. The certificate should be kept securely with other documents and produced for your Inspecting Architect. If the installation is not certified as satisfactory, remedial work must be undertaken.

Employer's Liability Insurance Certificate

This is included in the paperwork sent with your insurance renewal documents and should be displayed in the church building. Although strictly it can be made available for inspection electronically it is advisable to display a hard copy. Previous years certificates should be retained in case of a retrospective claim.

Faculty Certificates

All 'alterations, additions, removals or repairs...in the fabric, ornaments or furniture of the church' require a faculty unless they fall within certain limits laid down by the chancellor of the Diocese. A certificate is issued to record the grant of a faculty and these should be kept carefully and permanently in a file or folder in the church safe.

Fire Extinguisher Service Certificate

Fire extinguishers should be serviced annually and the certificate kept securely with other parish documents.

Fire Risk Assessment

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires churches to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment to identify any possible dangers and risks, as well as the people who may be at risk.

A form is available on the Ecclesiastical website, and this can be completed and saved electronically.

Health and Safety Policy

The following is an extract from Ecclesiastical's advice on Health and Safety:

Health and safety legislation applies to all places of religious worship. The Health and Safety at Work etc, Act 1974 requires every employer with five or more employees to 'prepare and bring to the notice of their employees a written statement of their general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of their employees and the organisation and arrangements for carrying out that policy'. There will be some large churches where the Parochial Church Council actually employs five or more people and in these cases there is no doubt that a written health and safety policy statement is required. Employers with less than five employees are exempt from the requirement for a written health and safety policy. However, the Health and Safety Executive now regards volunteers as employees and persons who make use of volunteers as employers. The same level of training, information and protection must be given to both volunteers and employees. In the light of this it is good practice to have a written policy that sets out your organisation and procedures for health and safety, even if you employ less than five people.

You should therefore have a written Health and Safety Policy, with a named PCC Health and Safety Officer, who will report regularly to the PCC. Regular Risk Assessments should be carried out, for every part of the church and associated buildings, and for every church activity.

A model policy is available on the Ecclesiastical website, and this can be completed and saved electronically. As with all policies it should be communicated effectively, implemented carefully and reviewed regularly. The Health and Safety Policy is one of the component policies of the **Safe Church Policy**

GDPR

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will take effect in the UK from 25 May 2018. It replaces the existing law on data protection (the Data Protection Act 1998) and gives individuals more rights and protection in how their personal data is used by organisations. Parishes must comply with its requirements, just like any other charity or organisation.

Information and resources have been developed for parishes to help ensure you are compliant. They can be found at www.parishresources.org.uk/gdpr/

Lightning Conductor Test Certificate*

Ecclesiastical advise that lightning conductors should be properly maintained and inspected at least every four years – ideally every two-and-a-half years. The certificate should be kept securely with other documents and produced for your Inspecting Architect. If the installation is not certified as satisfactory, remedial work must be undertaken.

Log Book

A record of all work carried out on the church building, including alterations, additions, repairs and other events affecting the church. The Churchwardens are required to keep this up to date, and present it at the final PCC meeting before the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. Loose-leaf sheets for this can be obtained from Church House Publishing and elsewhere. The nature of the work and materials used, the name of the contractor, cost, and the date and details of the faculty or other permission given should all be included. It is a valuable document for future Churchwardens and PCCs and useful to the Inspecting Architect.

Marriage Registers, Banns Register and Certificate Book

All these should be kept in the church safe. There are two copies of the register book. It is particularly important to keep the certificate book secure. It could be used for fraudulent purposes. When full, one copy of the marriage registers is retained in the safe and one is sent to the Superintendent Registrar. New Banns Register Books can be purchased on line, from SPCK and elsewhere. Permanent black ink should be used for entries.

PCC Minute Book

PCC minutes are an important legal document but there is no requirement for them to be kept in a particular format. Signed hard copies should be kept securely, [in addition to any electronic copies that may be kept] and permanently and be readily available for inspection by those who are entitled to see them. A sturdy loose-leaf binder, kept tidily, is satisfactory. APCM minutes (see above) should be kept separately. Detailed advice on looking after minutes and other important documents is in the publication '*Keep or Bin...?*' - *The Care of your Parish Records*' on the Church of England website.

Receipt for registers (and other documents) deposited in the Diocesan Archive*

Any records or registers which are either over 100 years old, or whose first entry is over 150 years old, must be deposited with the Diocesan Record Office, unless an exemption is obtained from the Bishop. Other records, except for current registers, can also be deposited at the Diocesan Record Office. When this is done a receipt is issued, which should be kept in the church safe.

Register of Burial of Cremated Remains*

This should be separate from the main burial register and should refer to the position of the burial plot on the churchyard plan. Parish may want to adapt the use of a separate burial register, as specific cremated remains is unavailable.

Register of children admitted to Holy Communion before confirmation*

Parishes that are given permission to admit children to Holy Communion before confirmation are required to keep a register. A suitable register book is now available from Canterbury Press.

Service Register

This should be kept in the safe when not in use. Permanent black ink should be used and the name of the church should be inscribed on the first page.

Table of Fees (including local 'optional extras')

Parishes must adhere strictly to the statutory requirements for charging parochial fees, and a table of all fees, including local charges for 'optional extras', should be on public display in the church. Further information is available on the Diocesan website and from the Finance Department in Church House.

Terrier and Inventory

A list of lands and property owned by the parish (Terrier) and a list of the contents of the church building (Inventory). Also known as the 'Church Property Register', loose-leaf sheets to compile these can be obtained from Church House Publishing and elsewhere. The Churchwardens are required to keep these up to date, and check them annually before the final PCC meeting before the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

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