



**Diocese
of Portsmouth**

**GUIDELINES
FOR
OCCUPANTS OF
PARSONAGES
AND OTHER
DIOCESAN PROPERTIES**

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INTRODUCTION

Why have I got this guide, is it just another thing to read?

This guide is to help you. You have received it, because the property you (will) occupy comes under the oversight of the Diocesan Property Sub Committee. We work in partnership with the parish and with you. The Bishop's Council (in its capacity as the Parsonages Board) has delegated responsibility to the Committee for implementation of policy relating to housing, so that all have equal and fair treatment. If you need to consult the Committee, please contact the Property Manager or Administrator of the Property Committee, at the Diocesan Office.

So who needs to read this guide?

In short, all those who live in Diocesan housing. Even if you live in a parish house, (one the PCC looks after) this guide might help you and the parish, or it may just be a useful source of information. We would encourage you to discuss this document with your PCC. Property Department staff and members of the Committee are happy to talk to you about the role of the Parsonages Board, and the part we need you to play in the provision of housing in the Diocese of Portsmouth.

So, it's just a set of rules?

In all that the Committee tries to do, we aim to work with a minimum of *rules*. There are some, because Housing is one of the most expensive costs of the Diocese and we need your help to maintain, improve and conserve our properties, so that parishes are not faced with Quota rises that are inappropriate.

Are these just my responsibilities?

You will find that we have tried to clarify what is the responsibility of:

- The Diocesan Property Committee (DPC)
- The Parish or PCC
- The Occupant of the House

So the board are actually trying to help me?

Yes!! We want you to enjoy the house in which you (and your family) live, as part of the support you receive from the Diocese in the exercise of your ministry. No home is ever perfect, but the board tries to do as much as is possible, within the constraints we have, to provide good properties for clergy and their families to live in.

So the board has lots of cash for properties then?

No. In this Diocese, Parishes contribute to the cost of the repairs of Parsonage houses in the parish quota system: **Fairer Shares**. The Board's budget is often very small. In 2011 it was £275,000, which sounds a lot – but between the properties, it doesn't go far (that's around £2000 per property per year). Hence the three-fold division of responsibility between the Board, the parish and the occupant. Each group has a vital role to play in the good maintenance of property. Please make sure that everyone who should, knows about these responsibilities.

What do these staff do?

The staff of the property department do all that is reasonable to help, and often do much more. They understand that works to a parsonage can be stressful and difficult when you are busy with parochial responsibilities. They work very hard to help you – so please help them. Sadly, things sometimes go wrong. Please remember that courtesy costs nothing, and often helps to speed the whole process along. The Staff will always try to do their best.

PREAMBLE

This section of the document sets out the terms on which, subject to the general provisions of the law, you will occupy your home, whether as a freeholder or under common tenure or a licence agreement. The remainder of these guidelines are written to help you understand the context and framework within which these rights and the diocesan policy and objectives are framed.

Your Rights & Duties

If you are a Freeholder or have Common Tenure you have certain rights and duties in respect of the parsonage house and the land on which it stands. Some of these are set out in the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 which includes the following general statement: *'The incumbent shall have a duty to take proper care of a parsonage house, being a duty equivalent to that of a tenant to use premises in a tenant-like manner.'*

If you are a Licence Holder then your rights of occupancy will be framed within the *Landlord and Tenants Act 1985*.

Diocesan Policy and Objectives

The diocesan policy in relation to parsonage houses and other houses is set out in detail in this document.

The Diocesan Property Team based at the Diocesan Office is ready to help with any queries that you may have about your property. During your occupancy, the team will be responsible for ensuring that the property is wind and water tight, and for the state of the essential services – water, power, drainage, sewage, and heating. The team is also responsible for any forest-type trees in the garden.

Your Obligations

Your obligations as occupant include the following:

- To inform the property team without delay of any damage or defect requiring the team's attention.
- To be responsible for fruit trees, shrubs, hedges etc in the garden.
- To keep the garden in reasonably good order and not allow rubbish etc to collect in the grounds.
- Not to make or allow any alterations to the property which have not been authorized by the Diocesan Surveyor, including modifications to the essential service installations.
- Not to make or allow any alterations to the boundary of the property.
- To vacate the property on leaving office and leave it in a clean and tidy state ready for immediate re-occupation. The property must be emptied of all personal belongings and furniture when you vacate the premises. If you do not do this, you should be aware that the Diocesan Board of Finance has the right to recover from you the cost of clearing and cleaning the property.
- The Diocesan Board of Finance has the right to recover from you the cost of repairing any damage you or your family cause during your occupancy.

Please contact members of the Property Team or your Archdeacon if you have any queries or encounter any difficulties at any time. We want to do all that we can to enable you to be comfortable and feel secure in your home.

THE GUIDELINES

ADMINISTRATION

The Property Portfolio

The Diocese of Portsmouth has three archdeaconries, which are organised into 142 parishes (benefices 126). The vast majority of diocesan clergy have housing provided as part of their terms of service

The Diocese, through its officers, is committed to enhancing the service it offers to those who live in its properties and to the effective custodianship of its property and land assets.

The Property Sub Committee

The Property Sub Committee advises the Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Finance (PDBF), in its role as the Diocesan Parsonages Board ('the Board'), regarding property within the Diocese. The members of the Property Sub Committee are appointed to the Committee for their perspectives as members of the clergy, family of clergy and professionals in the area of property. They meet about four times a year to fulfil the following objectives:

To ensure appropriate and cost effective management of parsonage houses and diocesan property.

To maximise, on behalf of the Diocese, the return from property assets.

To reach the most financially and practically beneficial decisions regarding property disposals and acquisitions.

To maximise appropriate and efficient use of diocesan property.

To consider and reflect on matters where there is potential or actual dispute with the occupants of properties.

To fulfil an audit function in respect of practical and/or policy decisions made by the Parsonages Board and diocesan staff.

To apply the policy established to mitigate the environmental impact of diocesan property.

The Archdeacons

Particularly with regard to clergy housing, the Archdeacons have an important role in ensuring that the housing stock is fit for purpose. Primarily this is achieved through effective liaison with occupants, all interested parties in the parishes and the Diocesan Officers. Each Archdeacon meets regularly with the Diocesan Officers to ensure that matters are being addressed particularly during the appointments process as vacancies arise.

Note: Glebe properties and other clergy housing not in use for ministry are administered directly by the Diocesan Officers and through estate agents. Where parsonages, curates' and assistant curates' houses are being let out on a temporary basis the Archdeacons are, of course, more directly involved.

The Property Team

The Diocesan Property Team consists of two officers:

- Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager;
- Sue Rau, Property Administrator;

The Property Team reports directly to the Deputy Diocesan Secretary who is one of the senior officers of the Diocese.

The team is based at the Diocesan Office at Peninsular House in Portsmouth and has responsibility for the maintenance and administration of the various Diocesan properties on behalf of the Board.

The Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager has oversight of the property team and is the budget holder. Their primary role is to provide direction to the management of the estate's assets and ensure that property complies with Diocesan policy and legislative requirements.

Sue Rau is the primary contact for matters of maintenance and repair of the housing portfolio.

Please do not contact the Property Manager directly with requests to carry out work at your property. The first point of contact should be Sue Rau who will then issue a Works Order to a contractor to carry out any authorised repairs to your property.

Contact details are given at the end of this document.

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Budget

The Board is committed to providing realistic budgets for the maintenance and improvement of the property portfolio. The main source of income for this work is through the parish share. During clergy vacancies vicarages are let to tenants and the resulting income is fed back into the overall Diocesan budget and therefore helps to reduce parish share. The budget holder is the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager.

Works are carried out within four headings:

Planned Maintenance: Works of maintenance and repair that are programmed and do not involve 'improvement value' for occupants. Generally, therefore these are non-cosmetic works. (i.e. roofs, gutters, electrical re-wires etc.)

Planned Improvements: Works of maintenance and repair that are programmed and include 'improvement value' for occupants. (i.e. kitchens, bathrooms, internal decorations, new central heating systems, double glazing, insulation etc.)

Cyclical Maintenance: Planned Maintenance works running on short defined cycles to meet requirements of legislation or definable maintenance cycles. (External Decorations – as required upon quinquennial inspection; Electrical Periodic Tests – 5 yearly; Electrical Visual Inspections & Gas safety checks – at changes of occupancy; and, Landlord's Certificates & servicing of boilers & heating appliances – annually.) Generally these cycles are driven by legislation.

Reactive Repairs

Inspection Repairs: Works of reactive repairs identified at the time of the Quinquennial Inspection or other visits carried out by the surveyors. (Generally minor repair need.)

Other Reactive Repairs: Unforeseen reactive repairs to breakdown identified by occupants.

Broadly the aim is to undertake work in a structured way within planned maintenance. The nature of reactive work should generally be minor and may involve an element of a 'holding repair' until major maintenance can be programmed.

Contractors

When contractors are working under the supervision of the Property Manager; the clergy, members of their families, and PCC officers, should address concerns about the work being undertaken, preferably in writing, to the Property Team. There may be exceptional circumstances where direct contact is necessary between the occupant of the property and the contractor to avoid a crisis situation.

Council Tax

Council Tax in respect of the occupation of the Parsonage House is paid from the Diocesan Office. Clergy and PCCs should refer correspondence regarding Council Tax to the Diocesan Office. Council Tax is not paid when a house is temporarily unoccupied pending reoccupation by a Minister of Religion. Moving-in and moving-

out dates must be communicated to the Property Administrator so that the appropriate reimbursements are claimed.

When houses are let, tenants become responsible for Council Tax.

The Diocese is also able to claim a Council tax rebate for **Single Occupancy**. Where occupants live alone, or circumstances change this must be communicated to the Property Administrator otherwise the Diocese will be in breach of the law. Where appropriate such matters are dealt with in absolute confidentiality.

See also 'Lettings and Lodgers'

Damage

The Board will adopt a pro-active approach in recovering the cost of damage caused directly or through neglect by the occupants of a Parsonage. The provisions of section 13(4) of the Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 (see below) will be activated with regard to the occupier paying for repairs resulting from a lack of reasonable care of the property.

13 (4)

Where the report of a diocesan surveyor, 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 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:

Provided that in any such proceedings it shall be open to the defendant to show that the cost so certified is not attributable to such act or default as aforesaid, or that the amount required to be paid exceeds the cost so attributable, and judgment may be given accordingly.

See also 'Pets'

Grants

See 'Appendix 4 Notes on Removal, Resettlement & First Appointment Grants'

Insurance

The Board insures the parsonage, freehold and glebe buildings together with their fixtures and fittings for standard risk including third party claims. Any damage or any claim for compensation should be reported immediately to the Property Administrator who will advise, and who will, if appropriate, notify the insurers.

Household contents including TV aerials are not covered. It is important that clergy make their own arrangements for the insurance of their personal possessions.

Repairs: External

External repairs, agreed to be necessary, are the responsibility of the Board. The Board, in consultation with the clergy concerned, reserves the right of discretion to remove unnecessary items and demolish superfluous or dangerous buildings where this is agreed to be more appropriate.

Repairs: Internal

The Board expects clergy to do very basic jobs such as replacing a missing screw. Care should be taken not to undertake any work which would put people at risk, nor to embark on repairs which are beyond the capabilities of those concerned. **Under no circumstances should an occupant undertake any work to any mains service, such as plumbing, electrics, gas/oil installations or anything that would affect the structural integrity of the property.** All matters involving the PDBF in expenditure must have prior approval in writing through the Property Team before work is put in hand.

It is a legal requirement that work to the electrical installation should only be carried out by a 'Competent' Contractor¹. Work to the gas installation must not be carried out except by Gas Safety Register approved contractors (Formerly CORGI). All work specifications must be agreed by the Property Manager prior to any work commencing.

Water Rates

When a parsonage is occupied in the normal way, it is expected that the PCC will meet water rates. The Board pay the water rates for title curates and Diocesan Officers in Board properties. Tenants are responsible for water rates in respect of the houses which they rent.

Water rates are not paid when a house is temporarily unoccupied. As the rates are normally paid six months in advance, those who have paid their water rates can claim a refund.

¹ "Competent Contractor" includes any Full Scope Part P Competent Contractor carrying certification from NICEIC, ECA, ELECSA and NAPIT.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Quinquennial Inspection

These are carried out every five years by the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager. The inspection will review the condition of the house and its grounds. The surveys are not intrusive and occupants are not asked to undertake special preparation prior to the survey. However, the surveyor will need to see right round the property, including loft spaces, and access should be afforded accordingly. The survey will also review the fixtures and fittings and the trees.

See also 'Trees'

Following the survey a short report will be issued including a list of minor and holding repairs that will be undertaken as a result of the inspection. Proposals for planned maintenance and improvement works will be carried forward to the maintenance programme.

Alterations

Incumbents should be aware that under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 no additions or alterations may be made to a Parsonage house without the prior written consent of the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager on behalf of the Board.

See also 'Self-financed'

Others who occupy houses owned by the Diocese should note that their occupation gives them no right to alter or add to the property.

Green Guide

The Church Commissioners publish a book on parsonage standards and good practice known commonly as 'the Green Guide'. The guide is applicable to new build parsonage housing.

The Board uses the document as a broad guide to assess the suitability of existing housing or new acquisitions but, for a variety of reasons, it is unrealistic to expect that all parsonages will comply exactly with all the guidelines.

Lettings and Lodgers

The law governing the letting or leasing of a Parsonage house or its grounds is complex and numerous approvals are required. If clergy believe there are special circumstances that will make a tenancy or lease appropriate they should contact the Property Team for advice on procedures immediately.

There are legal considerations to be taken into account if clergy take in lodgers. The Board must be consulted and agreement reached before any such arrangement is made. In the event of an interregnum all lodgers must vacate with or before the incumbent.

See also 'Council Tax'

See also 'Lodgers'

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

Some houses are listed under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* as being of architectural interest and are required by law to be kept in good order. Alterations or major repairs require planning permission and Listed Buildings consent.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE: When a building is listed, it is **listed in its entirety**, which means that both the exterior and the interior are protected. In addition, any object or structure fixed to the building and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948, are treated as part of the listed building.

It is a criminal offence to carry out work which needs listed building consent without obtaining that consent beforehand.

Occupants of Listed Building will be informed of this fact at appointment.

FROM MOVING IN TO MOVING OUT

Acceptance of an Appointment

During a vacancy a visit will be made by the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager, who may be accompanied by the Archdeacon and Churchwardens, to inspect the house and make recommendations about work that is required under the headings of maintenance, improvements, repairs and vacancy decorations.

The Property Sub Committee will be apprised of the recommendations. The Deputy Diocesan Secretary, on the advice of the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager, in consultation with the Archdeacon, will authorise a schedule of work. The Board will finance all the repairs and improvement and decorating thought to be necessary.

See 'Decorations – Internal'

Before anyone is offered a post in the Diocese, where the occupation of a house is part of the appointment package, the individual will be shown the house and made aware of any work that is scheduled to be undertaken during the vacancy.

The appointment is offered on the basis of acceptance of the house for residence and that no extra work will be done other than that which has been already planned, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Prior to Moving In

Once an appointment has been offered the Diocesan Officers are normally informed of a pending appointment and some informal discussions may then take place regarding the property.

Certain financial assistance is offered and this is dealt with by the Personal Assistant to the Diocesan Secretary. This assistance includes arrangements for removal quotes, moving grants, where applicable first incumbency grants and arrangements for the payment of stipends or salaries.

Formal discussions are only possible once a clear Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check has been received and the appointment has been formally announced by Bishopsgrove.

All occupants of diocesan and parsonage property are required to sign documents agreeing to certain terms and conditions.

- Incumbents acknowledge receipt of their *Statement of Particulars*, which includes a section that sets out the basic principles of occupancy, and receipt of a copy of these guidelines.
- Priests in Charge, Assistant Curates and other occupants sign a *Licence to Occupy* authorising them to occupy the property to enable them to carry out their duties.
- Tenants of property occupy them under the terms of Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreements under Part 1 of the *Housing Act 1998*, which is issued by the letting agent.

Keys

Keys are the responsibility of the occupant. The occupant has the right to choose who holds keys to the property. The churchwarden will hold a set of keys to the property during a vacancy but upon occupation of the property must return them to the occupant.

The Property Team keep a record of the number of sets of keys that are given to the occupant upon the move-in to the property. All sets of keys must be returned to the Property Team upon vacation of the property. If all sets of keys are not returned to the Diocesan Office new locks will have to be installed to the property. All costs relating to the change of locks will be re-charged to the previous occupant. Should it transpire that extra sets of keys were copied and not returned to the Property Team upon vacation of the property all costs for changing the locks will be re-charged to the previous occupant.

Keys will not normally be given to new occupants prior to the agreed move-in date.

Adaptations for the Disabled

It is the policy of the Board to undertake reasonable adaptation of property to accommodate the needs of clergy and their resident dependants. Grants from Social Services and other organisations will be utilised to enable these works to be expedited. It may not be possible to undertake all works prior to occupancy as the criteria for the award of these grants needs to be means tested and this test includes occupancy in the property.

It is not the policy of the Board to finance adaptations for occasional visitors to the house (whether family members or otherwise). However the Board will support self-financed adjustments where these are both reversible and carried out to the specification of the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager.

See also 'Self-Financed Improvements'

Parsonages and all other housing are private dwellings and as such do not come under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995 & 2005*. It is not therefore appropriate or possible for the Board to make adaptations to properties for visitors. It is recommended that for the purposes of meeting the requirements of the Act that clergy make 'alternative provisions' such as meeting individuals in their own homes or arranging meetings in other premises.

Fixtures List

The fixtures list is reviewed at vacancy and checked during the Quinquennial Inspection. It is designed to indicate the fittings in the property. Occupants are asked to consult with the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager prior to removing, altering or adapting items on the fixtures list.

Lodgers

Lodgers (i.e. a sub-let) are not allowed in a property. There may be, from time to time, the need for members of your extended family to be with you in your home for longer periods. Under no circumstances should people beyond your immediate family and dependants be allowed to occupy the premises without notifying the Property Team.

See also 'Lettings and Lodgers'

Pets

If clergy families keep domestic pets they will be held liable for any damage that arises as a consequence. For example, if a carpet/paintwork/wallpaper is damaged specifically by a pet or professional cleaning is required the full costs for rectification will be re-charged to the occupant. Under no circumstances should houses be modified, for example, by the fitting of cat flaps etc. unless prior written approval has been obtained from the Property Team and all modifications must be reinstated to original condition on vacating the property

See also 'Damage'

Meter Readings

Upon occupation and vacation of houses occupants should read all meters. This is important for your own protection.

Self-Financed Improvements

Diocesan policies are broadly framed so that individuals are neither favoured nor disadvantaged by their own or local circumstances. There are occasions however where occupants wish to make improvements to properties that are outside the normal provision of the Board. Consideration will always be given to requests for such improvements and applications should be made in writing to the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager who may then wish to visit the house with the Archdeacon.

A decision will be made based on consideration of the effect of the improvement on the property in terms of both the local context and of the diocesan property portfolio. A key consideration will be the ongoing cost of maintenance once the occupant has moved on.

The improvements will only be allowed if they are carried out to a specification agreed with the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager and subject to inspection of the works on completion. The Board cannot recompense occupants who have undertaken self-financed improvements if they later move out of the property.

PCC-Financed Improvements

From time to time Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) wish to support the ministry of their clergy by funding improvements to the property. Such requests for improvements will be assessed on the criteria outlined above. In addition the improvements will only be sanctioned on the basis of full payment of parish share.

See also 'Self-Financed Improvements'

Vacating

When vacating a Parsonage the following advice must be followed.

Keys must be returned to the Diocesan Office with one set left with the Churchwardens.

Meters must be read.

The house must be made secure.

Fittings and fixtures must remain.

The house must be cleared of all furniture and personal possessions. Curtains may be left for the next occupants by private arrangement.

The house must be left clean, tidy and in good repair so that the property can be re-occupied immediately.

There must be twice weekly internal and external inspections of the house made by a Parish representative (this is a prerequisite of the insurance policy).

See also 'Damage'

Spouses in Parsonage Houses Following Death in Service

The death of one's spouse is, in all situations, a great tragedy and time of difficulty for the bereaved partner and family. The Diocesan Officers and the Archdeacons in particular work carefully to balance the needs of the bereaved family with the needs of the parish and the house as a focus for future ministry.

Following the death of a serving clergy person, the spouse should be reassured that he/she will be able to remain in the house for a period of at least three months. During that period, the relevant Archdeacon will work closely with the family to discuss and consider their future housing needs.

Any other specific requirements or expectations the family may have beyond this should be discussed fully and openly with the Archdeacon.

USE OF THE HOUSE

Policy Statement on Parsonage and other Clergy Studies

Background

The revision of this policy has become necessary because, in recent years, Parish Offices have evolved as a feature of parish administration and some have been developed to be integral with the Parsonage Study particularly in larger benefices with no other facility. This is outside the scope of the Parsonages Green Guide and the remit of the Board.

Definitions

Parsonage Study: Every Parsonage must include a separate room designated as the study. This must meet the clergy's need for a place of work and quieter activities, both pastoral and administrative, and to hold, in privacy, interviews and small meetings without disturbance. Sufficient space in the study for these activities will prevent their encroaching on family life elsewhere in the parsonage.

Crucially, the use of this space (as with the rest of the house) is under the control of any given incumbent and not the churchwardens, PCC or other members of the church. The study is not intended to accommodate parochial plant. Nor is it designed to be the administrative centre of parish affairs. However, any particular incumbent may engage, at their discretion, the services of a secretary or assistant to work from the parsonage study.

Parish Office: This facility, in the few instances where it exists, should not be integral with the parsonage house. It may therefore be the place of 'work' for an incumbent and Parish Administrator and will be a focus for administrative functions beyond the scope of the incumbent's private and personal matters. The size and nature of the Parish Office will vary greatly depending on the size and shape of ministry in the benefice. The provision of a Parish Office facility is a local matter and under the control of the incumbent, churchwardens, and other officers of the benefice or parish.

Study Policy

A study will be identified and equipped with bookshelves and adequate power points to enable the safe operation of a personal computer, fax machine and task lighting etc. Where practicable this room will be adjacent to the front door and a ground floor WC.

Having met the criteria of providing a designated study space in each parsonage house the Board does not define exactly how that space is used by clergy, except within the scope of the guidelines offered in the above definitions. **The decision on how the study is used rests solely with the incumbent at the time.**

However, the Board encourages the Archdeacons and Diocesan Officers to meet with PCCs and Churchwardens at the commencement of a vacancy in order to reinstate the 'normal' use of the Parsonage Study and to reiterate the incompatibility of any existing uses of the study that may be construed as being more appropriate to a Parish Office. This is to avoid embarrassment for the local church and any successor in office as current practice may be incompatible with the new incumbent's expectations or requirements of how they choose to use the parsonage as a focus and administrative base for their ministry.

Guidance Note

The Board encourages all diocesan clergy to be careful in the use of terms. The preferred designation is 'Study' and the use of the word 'office' is discouraged as it confuses and raises local expectation as to the use of the study within the parsonage by others.

The 'Green Guide' applies to 'new build' parsonage houses. Compromises in layout inevitably have to be accepted in houses that already exist on the estate or where a property is purchased to provide a new parsonage house. The Board aims to move houses as close to the 'Green Guide' as practical within the physical constraints of any building. Clergy are encouraged to adopt sensible modes of operation within the context of their own local situation.

The Board asks that practices are not set up locally that would be difficult to sustain during a vacancy or may be incompatible with the lifestyle or expectations of any future incumbency. It is the "right" of such use that is being cautioned rather than what is "acceptable use". Critically any uses of the 'private' accommodation (i.e. beyond the study and ground floor WCs) by others should be clearly defined as being at your personal discretion.

PCCs and church officers need to be encouraged not to see any accruing right for the study to become a centre for parish administration. The nature of the study and the rest of the house are essentially private. To give indication that it is otherwise is to open the door to complication in terms of insurances, public liability, employment law and so forth.

During a vacancy, it is not appropriate to have a parish secretary, administrator or parochial plant located in the parsonage. This is to enable preparatory works to be undertaken for the new incumbent or to enable the house to be let if practicable. The test applied by the Board and its officers to a locally designated 'parish office' on a Parsonage site is whether it is possible or appropriate to use the house independently from the 'designated' space by a party who is not the incumbent of the parish i.e. a tenant. In all instances where this test fails the use must desist during any interregnum and may only be reinstated at the discretion of the new incumbent.

Rights of access during a vacancy are reserved to a local key holder (normally a churchwarden), the Diocesan Officers and any contractors they may engage. All keys held by others must be returned to the Diocesan Office along with instructions for access, for use by the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager and contractors.

PCCs and churchwardens should note that to ask prospective candidates how they intend to use the house if appointed during the interview process might be considered inappropriate.

Guidance on Study Layout

Clergy are asked to consider very carefully the layout of their study. As a general rule of thumb when meeting with other people in the study, clergy are advised that they should position themselves between the interviewees and the door. This is to enable escape from any difficult or threatening situation and to raise the alarm. Furniture layout may play a part in enabling you to protect your own person in the event of such a situation arising.

Similarly, in the current climate of allegations of improper behaviour by clergy and other individuals towards parishioners, do bear in mind that the placing and height of furniture such as chairs can impact on the impression gained by others of any situation. A 'professional and welcoming' appearance is probably more appropriate than 'homely and intimate'. Common sense should prevail but do give the matter serious consideration.

Reception Rooms

The Green Guide clearly states that: "one of the family rooms (generally the living room) should be sufficiently large to allow clergy to offer hospitality to their parishioners. However this room should not be regarded as a substitute for a proper parish meeting place elsewhere."

Guidance Note

In reviewing the use and designation of the Parsonage Study, the Board considers it appropriate to reiterate the above guidance and its clear emphasis on 'hospitality' rather than the normally assumed 'use for meetings'. Meeting facilities and arrangements for meetings are a local matter and are beyond the scope and remit of the Board and the proper use of the parsonage house. As with the Study, any existing arrangements involving the 'use' of the reception rooms should lapse with a vacancy. They may only be reinstated at the discretion of the new occupants of the parsonage.

Insurance

Local arrangements must be made for the insurance of any contents in the parsonage. This is the responsibility of the occupant.

The Changing Shape of Ministry

The Board recognises that the nature of ministry today is very different from past decades. It is the Board's remit to protect, where it may, the private nature of the Parsonage House. It also reviews, from time to time, the nature of that provision where opportunities for new build or alteration exist or become practicable.

The Board and its Officers will always consider the existing parsonage houses within the context of pastoral or other structural reorganisation with a view to ensuring that appropriate provision is made in new benefices. The nature and shape of the 'built' provision in a benefice is crucial and the Board recognises the parsonage and its facilities as an important component in that provision.

GENERAL GUIDANCE (PROPERTY)

This guidance is offered so that you are able to assist in the maintenance of the property you occupy and to ensure that all that can be done locally is being carried out so as to avoid costly repairs arising from untimely notification of problems to the Diocesan Property Team.

Air Bricks and Damp Courses

Most houses have these. It is essential to see that earth and vegetation is prevented from blocking air bricks and that no earth is above the damp course. Walls should be kept clear of earth to a depth of about 9 inches (225 mm) below ground floor level or 6 inches (150 mm) below the damp course. In particular care should be taken if occupants are altering garden and/or paving levels. Please ensure air bricks are kept clear and free of obstruction at all times.

Asbestos

The *Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002* legislation is vague on whether it applies to parsonage buildings. However the Diocese clearly has a duty of care, in its role as a property manager, to any contractors engaged to undertake work on vicarage premises. Best practice suggests that the spirit of the legislation should be followed. The Diocese already has some information on the location of asbestos-based materials in parsonages and this will be added to over following quinquennial periods. The result will be that possible asbestos containing materials (ACMs) will be identified. It should be assumed that unless there is good reason to presume otherwise that all other materials should be assumed to contain asbestos.

See also Appendix 1 – ‘Asbestos’

Chimneys, Flues and Ventilation

The Board is responsible for the structure of the chimney and the fire place. The Diocesan policy is that all gas fires and solid fuel burning stoves are removed from the property during a vacancy unless the appropriate and valid certificates of installation and maintenance are provided upon move-out of the occupant.

Should you wish to have an open fire you will be responsible for supplying the appropriate fittings such as a grate and the cost of any necessary lining of the chimney. The occupant will have to notify the Property Team that they intend to use the fire so the Property team can then arrange for the chimney to be swept annually and a certificate for the work will be retained at the Diocesan Office for insurance purposes. The cost of sweeping the chimney will be charged to the occupant. The regular sweeping of chimneys is essential. Blocked chimneys or flues can be fatal. Chimney fires can cause great damage to the house and unnecessary inconvenience to the family.

Should you wish to install a gas fire or solid fuel burning stoves this must be done in full consultation with the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager. Any installation must be conducted by a fully-qualified technician and a valid certificate of installation must be given to the Property Team for the property file.

You will be solely responsible for the maintenance of such installations and an annual maintenance certificate must be sent to the Property Team for the property file. If you leave the property and valid certificates are not available for the installation the Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Finance will be forced to remove the installation and the cost of this will be re-charged to you.

Any air bricks installed to satisfy the minimum Building Regulation ventilation requirements for appliances must never be blocked, obstructed or covered over as this could have fatal consequences for anyone in the property.

See also Appendix 2 Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Condensation

Millions of homes in the UK suffer from condensation every year. Condensation is simply the result of warm, moisture laden air coming into contact with a cold surface and turning from a warm vapour into condensing water droplets.

Condensation usually appears on windows and mirrors. In extreme cases, it can cause mould to appear inside cupboards, on clothes inside wardrobes and behind furniture close to or in contact with external walls. Fortunately, extreme cases like this are very rare and the problem should be recognised and dealt with long before this situation arises. If you think you have a problem with condensation please contact the Property Team.

The occupants of parsonages can greatly assist in preventing condensation problems through the following:

- by producing less moisture through putting the lids on saucepans whilst cooking and ventilating the tumble dryer;
- by ventilating to remove moisture when someone is in and ventilating the kitchen and bathroom while in use and shutting the door;
- by not turning off extractor fans at the isolator;
- by having a constant gentle and even heat throughout the property i.e. not turning off the heat in unused rooms and not going from extreme heat to cold.

The drying of clothes in the stair well is very much discouraged as this causes damp in inadequately ventilated houses.

Exceptionally bad cases of condensation can cause health problems to occupants and damage to the fabric of the building.

Decorations – External

The Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager will arrange for the outside of the house, including its outbuildings, to be painted, stained or treated with preservative as appropriate as part of the quinquennial works.

Decorations – Internal

AT VACANCY: In addition to any consequential decoration required because of repairs and or alterations, the following areas will be decorated at Board's expense: hall, stairs and landing, the study and downstairs WC and the kitchen floor. Please note that if flooring is found to be wearing out, in these areas, it will be carpeted over not replaced/repared. (These areas are identified as being those that ensure that occupants are able to offer hospitality to parishioners in appropriately decorated interiors.)

HALL, STAIRS, LANDING & STUDY: At the vacancy inspection the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager and the Archdeacon will determine if the hall, stairs and landing require redecoration. If it is required the Board will meet the cost of painting and carpeting the hall, stairs and landing prior to the move-in of the new occupant. The Board has the walls of the public areas painted in magnolia and

gloss-work done in brilliant white. The Board does not install or replace wallpaper as it is more prone to damage.

If redecoration is necessary as a consequence of building works authorised and carried out by the Board, reasonable costs involved will be met.

If redecoration is necessary as the result of an insurable event such as fire, flood or structural improvement, then the Diocesan Office will make the necessary arrangements.

OTHER AREAS OF THE HOUSE: Regarding internal decoration in other areas of the house, many PCCs assist the clergy and some occupants “Do it Themselves”. If you or volunteers carry out the work, care should be taken to ensure that everyone works safely, within their competence and to a decent standard. Whatever method you adopt the Property Team trusts that you will hand the house over in good order.

Thought should be given to colour schemes. If you paint the walls in bold colours they must be returned to pale neutral shades prior to you vacating the property to ensure that the property can be immediately re-occupied either by a member of the clergy or a tenant.

The parish are responsible for the cost of decoration of one room in the property per year.

Drains²

TOILETS: Sewers are only designed to take away water, toilet tissue and human waste. All paper and plastic waste, such as sanitary products, nappies and wet wipes, should be wrapped up and placed in a bin. Even the smallest of items, like dental floss and cotton buds, can have a damaging effect as they collect in the filters at sewage treatment works and can cause machinery to break down.

Although wet wipes are very useful when toilet training toddlers or removing make-up, they should be disposed of in the same way as nappies – in the bin. Wipes do not break down like tissue, so may not get washed away down the pipe. When wipes mix with solidified fat, they set hard, forming a solid obstruction.

Even items that are marketed as ‘flushable’ or ‘biodegradable’ contribute to blockages.

Although these items disappear when you flush the loo, they do not break down in the sewers, as they take a number of years to disintegrate.

SINKS: Fat and oil poured down the sink after cooking is most likely to block your drains. Fat may be in liquid form when you pour it away but it quickly cools down and becomes hard, forming a thick coating around the inside of the pipes. When fat mixes with other items, such as wet wipes, it can form a solid obstruction, restricting the flow in the pipe and causing a blockage. The wastewater running through the pipe will then find an alternative place to flow out from, which may cause flooding.

Please note, these items must NOT be flushed down a toilet or poured down a drain:

Fat and oil	Wet wipes
Female hygiene products	Nappies
Kitchen roll	Food waste

² All information text on ‘Drains’ taken from *To flush or not to flush? Do you know what you should be flushing down your toilet or pouring down your drains?* Thames Water (2009)

Incontinence products	Colostomy bags
Cotton wool/cotton buds	Razor blades
Tights	Plasters and bandages
Latex products	Dental floss
Medicines and tablets	Engine oil, chemicals and paints

Chemicals, solvents, engine oil and paint should be taken to a local refuse site and medicines to a pharmacist for safe disposal.

Should the Diocese have to unblock a drain and the blockage is caused due to improper use of the drain the cost of the service will be recharged to the occupant.

Fixtures and Fittings

The Diocese provides and maintains various fixtures and fittings in its properties. These are itemised on a list that is reviewed at vacancies and at the quinquennial inspection.

These items should not be removed, altered or adapted without first consulting with the Diocesan Property Team.

The fixtures and fittings are considered to include the electrical services (power points, switches etc), heating systems, kitchen and bathroom fittings.

Fascias and Soffits

If any fascias or soffits are found to be rotten or rotting, they will be replaced with UPVC for longevity.

Gutters, Downpipes, Water Butts etc.

All gutters, down pipes, gullies and drains should be cleaned once a year during the autumn once leaves have fallen from the trees. If occupants notice that the gutters and downpipes are blocked they are asked to notify the Diocesan Property Team who will organise the cleaning of the gutters on behalf of the occupants and the Board will meet the cost of this essential work. Occupants are expected to regularly clear leaves from gullies.

If you decide to install a rainwater butt, please ensure it has an efficient overflow system connected back into the rainwater downpipe. Omission of the overflow connection will result in dampness to the property and potential subsidence to the structure.

Any damage to gutters, downpipes, gullies & drains due to negligence or unauthorised adaptations, must be paid for by the occupant.

Insulation

All lofts should be insulated. Most lofts already have fibreglass quilt insulation to a minimum depth of 280 mm. If a loft is lacking this insulation then the Property Team should be advised. The laying and subsequent disturbance of insulating material should only be carried out by trained personnel with the proper protective clothing including a mask.

The Diocese will examine the level of insulation in lofts during the property's quinquennial. Should you wish to increase the level of insulation in your loft before your next quinquennial the specification of works must be approved by the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager before a contract is entered into.

In order for insulation to work it **cannot be compacted**. In older properties the ceiling joists are not sufficiently high enough to take the modern minimum depth of 280mm of insulation and have a floor covering to enable storage without compacting the

insulation. Should you wish to have more loft insulation but retain storage space in your loft the cost of raising the ceiling joists cannot be met by the Diocese.

Loft

It is not the policy of the Board to install or maintain loft ladders. Broken, damaged or defective loft ladders will be removed when discovered. Lofts are not constructed to provide significant storage space. The joists are ceiling joists and not floor joists and therefore cannot take significant weight loads and any use of lofts for large amounts of storage can result in structural damage to the property.

Overflow Pipes

If you notice that you have water leaking or dripping from an overflow pipe please inform the Property Team immediately.

This could be indicative of a much more serious problem and in the worst cases could result in your home being flooded.

Please do not ignore leaking overflow pipes. They are easy to fix in the early stages but can cause costly and major problems to the structure if left unattended.

Pest Control

The top ten common household pests in the UK are flies, fleas, ants, wasps, mice, rats, spiders, moths, woodlice, bedbugs and cockroaches. Your local council will have a pest control service. You can find the relevant contact details at the following web address: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/index/council/localgov/redirect-district.htm>

Occupants must insure that domestic pets such as cats and dogs are regularly treated to prevent flea infestations. All flea infestation remedial work must be paid for by the occupant.

Replacement Windows

The Board will consider replacing existing singled glazed windows with double glazed sealed units during a vacancy, at the time of the quinquennial inspection or where exceptional circumstances prevail. Priority will be given to replacement of windows where insulation is poor, the fabric has deteriorated or there is a security concern.

Secondary glazing fitted inside an original window is seldom satisfactory. The Board may not contribute towards the cost of secondary glazing and may not grant approval for such work unless it is the only option available.

Security

The Board places a high priority on ensuring that houses have good physical security including high quality locks to British Standard on stout doors and windows that can be locked shut. If keys for doors or windows are lost, it is the responsibility of the occupant to pay for their replacement. If doors, windows or their locks are broken due to being forced or misused the cost of repair or replacement will be re-charged to the occupant.

It is not appropriate or possible to seek to make parsonage houses into fortresses, for inappropriate measures can single them out as targets and are therefore counter productive.

Clergy concerned about the security of their house are advised to consult with the Property Team who will be able to offer guidance on good practice.

See also 'Alarm Systems'
See also 'Lighting'

GENERAL GUIDANCE (GROUNDS)

Boundaries

When work is required to existing boundary fences, walls etc, the Property Team must first be consulted. Responsibility may be with the owner on either side, or it may be shared with them. If responsibility is with the property or partly with the property, then the Board will meet the cost or its share of the cost. However, should the repair to the boundary be necessary due to neglect, the occupant will be liable for the cost. The Board cannot meet the expense of changing boundary fencing for the occupant's preferred type for their children or domestic pets.

Driveways/Patios/Paths/Car-port

Clergy families should keep all of these areas in good condition with weeds removed and drains kept clear of leaves, earth, seedlings and other obstructions. Any deterioration of the surface should be reported to the Property Team. The Board may authorise payment for major repairs essential to health and safety for driveways and access to the house, however they are not liable for the upkeep of these areas. The Board is not responsible for the upkeep of patios and paths. If a carport is rotten or deemed unsafe it will be taken down, not replaced or repaired.

Fishponds

The Diocese is not responsible for the upkeep or maintenance of fishponds. When you vacate your property please ensure that all fish have been removed from the pond and that no ongoing maintenance will be required after your departure.

Gardens

There is no Diocesan money for the maintenance of gardens except when a new house is purchased and then there is a once and for all provision.

It is expected that gardens will be kept in good order by the clergy or, during vacancy, by the Parochial Church Councils (PCCs).

There are certain tax concessions available to clergy for expenditure on garden maintenance. The appropriate form is sent to clergy, from Church Commissioners, each year in respect of this and is combined with the form for tax allowance on heating, lighting and cleaning of the parsonage house.

Hedges

Hedges are considered as part of the garden and as such are the responsibility of the occupant, or, in a vacancy, the PCC. Expenditure on maintenance will not be reimbursed. The Diocese will be responsible for maintaining any large trees or significant branches overhanging the footpath or highway but all small branches from hedges and shrubs are the responsibility of the occupant and parish to remove and maintain. Should a hedge grow out of control to the extent that the Diocese receives an Encroachment Order due to blocking or overhanging of a public footpath or highway the cost of this will be recharged to the occupant.

If you receive an Encroachment Order from the Highways Authority requiring you to cut back any trees or hedges overhanging a Public Highway please notify the Property Team immediately. All Highways Authorities have the power to issue such orders under the terms of the *Highways Act 1980*.

Occupants of parsonages should not plant *Cupressus leylandii* as hedge screening because of its rapid growth. Hedges must be kept at a height that is easy to maintain with a maximum of 6ft or 1.8m.

Information on hedges can be found on the Royal Horticultural Society's website http://www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Sustainable-gardening/pdfs/c_and_e_hedges

Japanese Knotweed

There are increasing instances in parsonage properties where we have to deal with infestations of this difficult weed. First, it is important to note that it is illegal to plant or propagate this plant under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*. Secondly, it is extremely invasive through its root system and strong growth that causes serious damage to foundations, buildings, flood defences, roads, retaining walls and other structures.

The weed is difficult and expensive to deal with but it is vital that it is removed once it is seen on site. This is a task for a specialist contractor and should not be attempted by occupants as it is classed as 'controlled waste' under part 2 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1990* and therefore it can only be disposed of at licensed landfill sites. Please contact the Property Team immediately if you see the plant in your garden or if you think this plant is growing on any property immediately adjacent to your own. Action can be taken to have the plant removed from neighbouring properties to prevent it from invading your property.

Typically the weed looks like a cluster of tall straight shoots and resembles bamboo. It grows with great speed. Further information on Japanese knotweed and other invasive and non-native plants can be found on the Royal Horticultural Society's website

http://www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Sustainable-gardening/pdfs/c_and_e_nonnative

Lighting

The outside of the house should be well lit for convenience and safety and to help with security. Each house is different and what is required will depend on local circumstances, the position of the house, the closeness of streetlights etc. Where additional security is required you can apply to the Board for assistance. The Board will consider meeting half the cost of automatically operated external lights controlled with passive infrared sensors. The maintenance of these systems however is the responsibility of the occupant and it should be noted that infrared detection lamps have an average of two years life span.

Trees

Advice should always be sought from the Property Team before any tree is planted or replaced. Trees grown in proximity to buildings can cause severe and very expensive structural damage.

Written permission must be obtained from the Property Team before a tree is felled. Normally the work will be organised through the Diocesan Office, however, you may be required by the Diocese to remove sapling trees at a quinquennial inspection. These will normally be immature self-sown forest trees.

There are regulations in force concerning trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas. The Local Authority strictly enforces these regulations. Their written consent is required before any tree work is carried out even if the tree is diseased or dead. Unauthorised lopping or felling, or the causing of damage to a tree, will result in a fine and can cause much ill feeling. When work to trees is required the Property Team will appoint a specialist contractor who will be required to conduct consultations with the Local Planning Authority before proceeding.

The Board may offset any expenditure through the sale of the timber.

MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL SERVICES

Alarm Systems

Intruder Alarm Systems

The installation of an alarm system, where there is none, will be considered by the Board if a request is received. However, the Board will only pay for half of the installation; this is on the understanding that the clergy member or PCC maintain the system as per the system requirements. The parish, through the PCC is responsible for contracts for alarm systems.

An Intruder Alarm System should comply with British Standard 4737 and quotations must only be sought from reputable specialist contractors that are firms either recommended by the Police or on the official list of NSI registered firms (Formerly NACOSS).

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are fitted to all houses by the Diocese. Maintenance of these, and the replacement of the batteries, is the responsibility of the occupant. During the vacancy inspection if it is discovered that the smoke alarms have been removed or damaged by negligence the cost of reinstating the smoke alarms will be re-charged to the last occupant.

Boilers

The Property Team has arrangements in place for the annual servicing of gas fired and oil-fired boilers. If an occupant believes that there is an issue with the boiler, the Property Team must be informed immediately.

Built-in appliances

In certain situations built-in appliances may be found in kitchens (normally where houses have been bought into the estate). The Property Team is committed to retaining these appliances if they are fit for purpose. However, a pragmatic approach will be taken towards removing these anomalies (normally at vacancy or kitchen refurbishment). It is not the intention of the Property Team to remove good operational equipment unnecessarily. The purchase of new appliances is the responsibility of the new occupant.

Electrical Installations

The Diocese undertakes a periodic inspection (every 5 years) of the electrical installations. This inspection may highlight necessary repairs or upgrades to the system and these works are given a very high priority as not to undertake such repairs may affect occupant safety.

Occupants are reminded that recent changes in legislation require registered contractors undertake all electrical works. The Property Team must always retain the electrical safety check certificate. Occupants must not adapt or alter the electrical systems installed in the property unless prior approval has been given by the Property Manager and a qualified NICEIC engineer will be carrying out the work. (See Repairs: Internal and footnote on page 10.)

Gas Installation

The Property Team has in place arrangements for the annual testing of all gas-fired boilers in the parsonages.

The only gas appliance the Board is responsible for testing is the boiler. If there are any other gas appliances in the property then it is the responsibility of the occupant to

have these tested regularly – the report from this should be sent to the Property Team for their records.

Work to the gas installation and to gas appliances may only be carried out by Gas Safety Registered contractors. This is a legal requirement necessary on grounds of safety.

If there is a suspicion of a gas leak the following procedure should be followed.

Extinguish all naked flames. Do not switch on or off any electric lights or appliances because the spark in the switch may cause an explosion.

If possible turn off the gas supply at the mains.

Ensure good ventilation by opening doors and windows wide.

Seek help. Call TRANSCO – Tel: 0800 111999

The Gas Board should be immediately contacted. If this is not possible help should be sought from the contractor engaged to service the boiler and test the gas installation. If this is not possible then assistance may be sought from any GAS SAFE registered contractor.

See also ‘Cookers’

Heating

It is the policy of the Board to provide all houses in its care with full central heating.

The Property Team, in consultation with the clergy family, reserves the option of removing unsafe gas fires or solid fuel burning stoves altogether where there is a danger to the occupants and the installation does not satisfy the minimum legal Building Regulation requirements for such installations.

See also ‘Chimneys and Flues’

Heating Oil Tanks

The Property Team has in place provision for the annual servicing and inspection of domestic oil installations. Please make sure you order your heating oil in good time and never allow the tank to run dry or until empty. This will cause your whole system to stop working and will additionally require a qualified heating engineer to attend site, remove all the air-locks from the system and get it working again. Any costs for such avoidable work will be fully recharged to the occupant at the time of the repair.

If you suspect an oil leak anywhere in the system it is essential that you inform the Property Team immediately. Leaks can be noticed by smell, grass and plants dying or brown patches appearing on your lawns or borders.

Please be extremely careful when gardening, digging, strimming or cutting the grass when you are anywhere near the oil pipes or oil tank in your garden.

Calor Gas Installations

Calor Gas Above Ground LPG Tank Installation Maintenance³

The gas tank and fittings installed on the tank are Calor's property, with Calor being responsible for regular maintenance. The cost of this service is covered within the standing charge which includes the following:

- Before and during every tank refill our highly skilled drivers will carry out a range of important safety and maintenance checks.
- As safety is a number one priority at Calor, we always replace vital components well within their working lifetime and the driver will complete a safety check prior to filling.
- Periodic inspection and testing of the tank to ensure safety standards are maintained.
- Should a fault be detected, we will arrange for a Gas Safe® Register (formerly CORGI) Calor approved contractor to carry out the necessary remedial work, as soon as possible, at no cost to you.
- All maintenance processes are carried out by Calor's Inspection Team which is approved and continually audited by the United Kingdom Advisory Service (UKAS).
- Calor operates a Gas Emergency Service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Just call 0845 7444 999 if you have any concerns.

Private Sewage Installations

The Property Team has in place annual provisions for the inspection and maintenance of private sewage installations.

It is particularly important that the guidelines concerning what may or may not be flushed down your toilet or put into the drains are strictly adhered to for this type of installation.

See also 'Septic Tanks' and 'Drains'

Septic Tanks

It is the responsibility of the occupant to meet the costs of emptying and maintaining septic tanks. The Property Team arranges an annual inspection of septic tanks and a maintenance report for this is retained at the Diocesan Office.

Please note these items must NOT be flushed into a septic tank:

- Baby wipes
- Cat litter
- Chemicals: bleach, thinners, oils, varnishes, paints, pesticides
- Cigarette butts
- Coffee grounds
- Cooking oil
- Cotton swabs (Q-tips)
- Dental floss
- Female hygiene products

³ All the following information regarding Calor Gas is from Calor's website <http://www.calor.co.uk/heating/domestic-central-heating/storage-options/single-bulk-tank-supply/bulk-tank-maintenance/>

Latex products
Medicine
Nappies

The above list is by no means exhaustive but indicates the wide range of products that are not compatible with a septic tank.

Showers

Showers are provided by the Board as an improvement. The normal provision is a shower over the bath.

Curtains and shower doors must be properly positioned to avoid water getting on to the floors. All seals should be regularly checked and any defects reported to the office early before significant water damage can occur.

All of our properties are within a hard water area and shower heads will benefit greatly from being cleaned and treated with limescale removers from the supermarket. The efficiency and operation of shower heads will be severely affected by any build up of limescale.

The Diocese does not replace shower heads or hoses. These are relatively inexpensive items to purchase from any DIY store.

WHAT THE DIOCESE DOES NOT PROVIDE

Carpets

The Board does not provide carpets for any areas other than the hall, stairs, landing and study. Carpets are a private matter for the occupants. At the end of your occupancy you may leave these items behind for the use of your successor in office. It should not be assumed by incoming occupants that carpets will be left for their use as a matter of course.

Carpets in particular are vulnerable to damage. Any serviceable carpets present within a house at the start of a new incumbency should be regarded as a bonus.

The resettlement grant offered by the Diocese is intended to cover, in part, the costs of carpets.

The Property Team will check that vinyl/tile flooring in the kitchen, WC and bathrooms are fit for purpose prior to the occupation of the property. The occupant is responsible for the maintenance of these surfaces. The only time the Property Team will replace such flooring is if it is damaged as a result of essential structural works.

Cleaning

The Board does not provide cleaning prior to the move-in of a new priest as a matter of course. If the Board has undertaken works in the property a builders clean will be commissioned for the rooms/area within which the work took place.

When you vacate your property, if you do not leave it in a clean state ready for immediate re-occupation by either a member of the clergy or a tenant the Board will be forced to re-charge you for the cost of having it cleaned.

See also Appendix 3 – Instructions to Churchwardens During Vacancies

Cookers

At vacancies existing cookers, if fit for purpose, will generally be kept in the property. If the cooker is deemed not fit for purpose the provision of a new cooker will be the responsibility of the new occupant. The occupant will be responsible for ensuring that the appropriate engineer is engaged (Gas Safety Registered for gas or “Part P Certified” for electric) to fit the cooker and must supply the Diocesan Office with a copy of the certificate. (See Repairs: Internal on page 10.)

See also ‘Built in appliances’

Curtains

The Board does not provide curtains for any area of the property. The resettlement grant offered by the Diocese is intended to cover, in part, the costs of curtains.

Telephones

All arrangements regarding telephones/lines are the responsibility of the occupant. If upon vacancy it is discovered that a live line still exists at the property then a letter requesting that the line be terminated will be sent to the relevant person immediately.

The Property Team is not responsible for installing, maintaining or providing extra points for answering machines, computers or other office equipment.

Cable Telephone The installation of fibre-optic telephone cables is not permitted except on written application. Installation is subject to the written approval and to an

undertaking that the occupant and/or PCC formally accept the responsibility for any and all consequential costs arising.

Television

The Board does not accept responsibility for the provision or repair of TV aerials and related equipment.

Cable TV The installation of fibre-optic telephone cables is not permitted except on written application. It is subject to the written approval of the Property Team and to an undertaking that the householder and/or PCC formally accept the responsibility for any and all consequential costs arising.

Satellite TV In more remote locations cable TV will not be available and TV reception may possibly be poor. The installation of satellite dishes is not permitted except on written application and is subject to written consent. Consent will usually be given subject to an undertaking that the occupant and/or PCC formally accept the responsibility for any and all consequential costs arising from provision or removal.

The erection of a satellite dish may require the consent of the Local Authority, and the householder should make his or her own enquiries about this.

EMERGENCIES

Central Heating/Water

Should an emergency occur with your central heating or your water:

In Office Hours

Contact the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager or the Property Administrator. They have a list of approved contractors who will be able to help you.

Out of Office Hours

In cases of extreme emergency only, contact an emergency plumber via the yellow pages. Please ensure that you obtain an invoice or receipt for any work that is done so the cost of the emergency call-out can be reimbursed to you by the Diocese.

Gas

Should an emergency occur with your gas:

In Office Hours

Contact the Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager or the Property Administrator. They have a list of approved contractors who will be able to help you.

Out of Office Hours

Calor operates a Gas Emergency Service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Just call 0845 7444 999 if you have any concerns.

Other Emergencies

If you are unable to contact the Property Department as it is out of office hours please ask yourself if it can wait.

If it cannot and is urgent because more damage would result or there would be an immediate threat to life or property, then exercise caution and use a recognised contractor. Please ensure that you obtain an invoice or receipt for any work that is done so the cost of the emergency call-out can be reimbursed to you by the Diocese.

APPENDIX 1: A CHECKLIST OF HELP

It may be helpful to use the following list, as a way of identifying problems, and some simple bits of routine maintenance, that any householder is used to. It is not an exhaustive list, but might be a basis for a discussion between you and the PCC.

ONCE A YEAR

- Look at the trees in your garden for defects - Spring and after high winds and gales
- Check the central heating header tank is full and the ball valve free to move.
- Arrange through the Property Manager for the central heating boiler to be serviced under the Diocesan service contract.
- Ensure insulation in the roof space has not been disturbed and pipe lagging is in place - autumn.
- Clear rainwater disposal system - autumn.
- Put the property maintenance on the PCC agenda.

TWICE A YEAR

- Walk round the house during or after heavy rain to check that rainwater is not over-spilling or running down the walls from defective gutters or blocked downpipes.
- Check the electrical plugs on your appliances are safe.
- Clean out extractor fans.
- Kill weeds in driveway and if applicable rake gravel from sides and middle into wheel tracks.
- Oil hinges and stays to doors and windows.

FREQUENTLY

- Keep rainwater and kitchen gully gratings free of leaves and other debris.
- Look at roofs for defective or missing slates or tiles.
- Switch on central heating circulator for a few minutes once a week in the summer months. Radiator valves must be open for this to be effective.
- Check for leaks on toilets, overflows, flushpipes, etc.
- Check for leaks on white goods (washing machines) and showers as small leaks can cause great expense and have been causing £100's of damage each year. All leaks must be reported immediately when they are found or suspected.

WHEN REQUIRED

- Wipe up condensation from window sills in winter.
- Scrub with a solution of household bleach any mould on window joinery or walls.
- Tighten loose screws on hinges, locks, latches and other fittings before damage occurs, this also includes all doors and cupboards in the property.
- Beware frost damage while away from home

APPENDIX 2: ASBESTOS

Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002

These regulations came into full effect in May 2004. The regulation requires that Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs), which were used extensively in a wide range of construction materials throughout the last century, are managed and maintained.

Key points to note are that:

- The use of Asbestos in construction materials started in the 19th century and increased gradually until World War II. Large quantities were employed throughout the 1950s, 60s and early 1970s. Its use was subject to an informal ban from 1969 onwards with a total ban from 1999 onwards.
- Asbestos is only dangerous when the microscopic fibres are released. Therefore ACMs in good condition or encapsulated ACMs are not hazardous to health.
- Asbestos fibre inhalation is most likely to occur when the ACM is disturbed. Therefore monitoring and maintaining ACMs in-situ is often less hazardous than removing the materials.

Where is Asbestos in Buildings?

The short answer to this is nearly everywhere. Asbestos has good heat insulating properties, is fire resistant and its fibres are a good reinforcing agent in plastics. It is not found in naturally occurring building materials such as timber, stone or brick.

Typical applications are:

- Sprayed coatings to steel work for fire protection
- Laggings and packing for heat insulation of service pipes and tanks
- Asbestos Insulation Board (or AIB) used as a fire lining or often as ceiling tiles
- Rope and gaskets located round oven doors or electrical distribution box covers
- Mill boards and papers
- As a binding material in Asbestos cement
- Floor tiles, mastics and roofing felt
- Decorative paints and plasters including ARTEX.

The above list is by no means exhaustive but indicates the wide range of applications and by implication the locations of where ACMs are likely to be located.

Why is Asbestos a problem?

Although Asbestos has many good properties for use in construction (see above), the material is made up of tiny fibres, which when released can be inhaled and lead to various respiratory diseases such as lung cancer, Asbestosis and Mesothelioma. Exposure to the fibres, like lead poisoning, is cumulative, as the body has no mechanism for getting rid of the fibres. **Remember though that undisturbed or encapsulated asbestos is entirely safe. Removal of the material is not necessarily the right solution to the situation.**

APPENDIX 3: CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

What is carbon monoxide – why is it a problem?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, poisonous gas produced by incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels, including gas, oil, wood and coal. It is quite different from, and much more dangerous than, carbon dioxide. Carbon-based fuels are essentially safe to use. It is only when the fuel does not burn properly that excess CO is produced, which is potentially lethal. When CO enters the body, it prevents the blood from bringing oxygen to cells, tissues, and organs.

You can't see it, taste it or smell it but CO can kill quickly without warning. According to the HSE statistics around 20 people a year die from CO poisoning caused by solid fuel, gas fires and flues that have not been properly installed and maintained or that are poorly ventilated. Levels that do not kill can cause serious harm to health if breathed in over a long period. Many people associate CO poisoning with poorly maintained student bed-sit accommodation, but the risks are just as great in the private and rented housing sectors.

What the Diocese does to minimise the risk and meet its obligations.

The Diocese ensures that any work carried out in relation to gas appliances in our property is undertaken by a Gas Safe Registered engineer, competent in that area of work.

As your housing provider we have a legal duty to carry out annual safety checks and maintain gas and oil boilers and heating systems. We retain copies of all the completed safety check certificates. We do not service any other gas or oil fired appliances.

Should you choose to use an open fireplace in your property the Diocese will have the chimney swept annually by a qualified sweep and will retain the certificate. If you choose to have a gas fire or solid fuel burning stove it is your responsibility to maintain the installation and provide valid certificates annually to the Property Team.

What preventative measures can you take against carbon monoxide exposure?

Always make sure there is enough fresh air in the room containing your appliance (whether it is gas, oil, wood or coal fired). If you have a chimney or a flue, ensure it is not blocked up and also ensure that wall vents and airbricks are not covered or obstructed in any way.

If you have appliances not supplied by the Diocese that use gas or oil make sure they are serviced and maintained by a competent person. For information on competent persons' schemes, visit the Communities and Local Government websites – remember to forward a copy of the report/certificate to the Property Team as otherwise the building insurance may be invalidated.

You must never allow an unqualified person to install or carry out work on an appliance. You must never employ anyone to work on any mains service. Should you believe that works on necessary for a mains service contact the Property Team immediately.

You must never block airbricks or other ventilation equipment – if draughts are a persistent problem in your home please ask the advice of the Property Team.

Does HSE recommend the use of carbon monoxide alarms?

HSE strongly recommends the use of audible carbon monoxide (CO) alarms as a useful back-up precaution but they must not be regarded as a substitute for proper installation and maintenance of gas appliances by a Gas Safe Registered engineer. Before purchasing a CO alarm, always ensure it complies with British Standard EN 50291 and carries a British or European approval mark, such as a Kitemark. CO alarms should be installed, checked and serviced in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

You can be particularly at risk from CO poisoning when you are asleep, because you may not be aware of early CO symptoms until it is too late. Having an audible CO alarm could wake you and save your life.

Does the Diocese supply carbon monoxide alarms?

The Board considers that it fulfils its obligations with regard to the safety of gas and oil fired appliances through its annual servicing agreements. However this relies on you maintaining the equipment as it was at the time of the servicing and not tampering with ventilation measures.

What are the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

Early symptoms of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning can mimic many common ailments and may easily be confused with food poisoning, viral infections, flu or simple tiredness. Symptoms to look out for include:

- headaches
- breathlessness
- nausea
- dizziness
- collapse
- loss of consciousness
- tiredness
- drowsiness
- vomiting
- pains in the chest
- stomach pains
- erratic behaviour
- visual problems

For more information visit the NHS or telephone NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

If you or your family experience any of the above symptoms and you believe CO may be involved, you must seek urgent medical advice from either your GP or an accident and emergency department. You should ask for a blood or a breath test to confirm the presence of CO. Be aware, CO quickly leaves the blood and tests may be inaccurate if taken more than four hours after exposure has ceased.

How do I know if I am at risk from carbon monoxide?

Although carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas, signs that indicate incomplete combustion is occurring, resulting in the production of CO, include:

- Yellow or orange rather than blue flames (apart from fuel effect fires or flueless appliances which display this colour flame).
- Soot or yellow/brown staining around or on appliances.
- Pilot lights that frequently blow out.
- Increased condensation inside windows.

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- What should I do if I think my appliance is spilling carbon monoxide?
 - Switch off the appliance and do not reuse until remedial action has been taken.
 - Shut off the gas supply at the meter control valve (if you know where it is).
 - Open all doors and windows to ventilate the room - do not sleep in it.
 - Visit your GP urgently and tell him/her that you believe your symptoms may be related to carbon monoxide poisoning and request either a blood and/or breath sample.
 - Inform the Property Team at the Diocesan Office and repairs will be organised.

Diocesan Surveyor & Property Manager

(Source: this document has been adapted from the Health and Safety Executive Website. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/co.htm> and Graham Andrews, Diocesan Surveyor & Estates Manager of York Diocese.)

APPENDIX 4: INSTRUCTIONS TO CHURCHWARDENS DURING VACANCIES

During vacancies the foregoing guidelines will be of use to churchwardens who, as part of their duties, take on responsibility for benefice property. In particular they are required to ensure the following guidance is adhered to:

- a. All houses are insured with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group. A condition of the block policy is that, when a house is empty, a security check (including the efficacy of locks) should be carried out by the Churchwardens or a deputy once weekly, both inside as well as outside the premises.
- b. While the house is unoccupied from October to March, the water should be turned off at the mains for reasons of insurance. The Property Team will arrange for the water to be drained by a plumber from cisterns, pipes, radiators. Burst pipes in unoccupied properties that are not drained down are not covered by insurance.
- c. All parish equipment should be removed from the parsonage house. It should not be assumed that a new successor in office would automatically consent to their return once the appointment has been made.
- d. Gutters and all pipes should be kept clear. It is important that the house is aired before the arrival of the new priest. It is the duty of the Churchwardens to also see that the house is cleaned before the arrival of the new incumbent and for the PCC to pay any money that may be needed for this purpose.
- e. The day to day running repairs are the responsibility of the PCC, however all intended work must have the approval of the Property Manger before the work commences. DO REMEMBER that the need for a minor repair – such as a slipped slate – may indicate larger imminent failures of which the Diocesan Property team will need to be made aware. Major Repairs, of course, have to be considered by the Property Team. Unauthorised repair expenditure will not automatically be passed for payment, so always contact the office first. In an emergency the Archdeacon should be contacted.
- f. The Churchwardens must notify the Property Manger immediately when anything occurs which might involve a claim under the Insurance Policy.
- g. 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 Property Team.
- h. When a new Incumbent or Priest in Charge comes to the Parish the removal expenses will be met in full by the Diocese if the removal is within the British Isles. New Incumbents receive a resettlement grant to assist in the payment of new carpets and curtains and decorating costs. The PCC should not purchase carpets or curtains from the outgoing Incumbent.

APPENDIX 5: NOTES ON REMOVAL, RESETTLEMENT & FIRST APPOINTMENT GRANTS

Group A Archdeacons
Incumbents
Priests-in-Charge
Team Vicars
Non Parochial Clergymen of Incumbent Status

Group B Assistant Curates
Deacons and Licensed Lay Workers

REMOVALS

The Diocese will meet the reasonable costs of clergy removals (only by a firm appointed by the Board) for all in groups A and B above provided that the person's existing appointment/home is in an English Diocese. In the case of ordination or first licensing of curates or licensed lay workers, they must have taken up the appointment immediately following the completion of their training.

The Board will only pay for the removal firm approved by them. A specification of what is permitted within the fixed cost of the removal will include the undertaking of packing all china and breakables; all other packing will be your responsibility. If you request anything outside the aforementioned specification you will be given a quote for the additional work which, if you accept, you will be expected to pay direct to the removal company yourself.

Removal Insurance is provided through Ecclesiastical Insurance Group and our removers operate within the constraints of the group policy. **A summary of the policy is enclosed with these notes and you are encouraged to read it in order to understand the extent of the cover provided. Please also note that you will be liable for the first £50.00 of any claim.**

FIRST APPOINTMENT GRANT

The Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Finance will pay a grant (1 April 2011 – 31 March 2012) of £2,140.00 to those taking up an appointment for the first time after being ordained or licensed. The object of the grant is to help towards the cost of setting up a home for the first time and to compensate for the cost of robes, theological books and other equipment that will be needed. Those taking up a Self Supporting Stipendiary or 0.5 Stipendiary post will receive 50% of this grant, £1,070.00.

A further grant (1 April 2011 – 31 March 2012) of £2,140.00 will be payable on transfer from a Group B post to a Group A post. The grant is intended to help towards the cost of setting up home in a larger house.

RESETTLEMENT GRANT

The Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Finance will pay a resettlement grant, of a fixed maximum sum toward incidental expenses including alteration to, or purchasing of, furnishings. The levels set by the Archbishops' Council for the year 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 are:- **Group A - £2,140; Group B - £2,140**

If you have any queries regarding the above please contact
Mrs Jane Dobbs, PA to the Diocesan Secretary & Deputy Diocesan Secretary on 023
9289 9664 or jane.dobbs@portsmouth.anglican.org

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE STAFF

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- The Diocesan Board of Finance employs a maintenance worker to help with the day-to-day repair of properties in the Board's care on the mainland.
 - They are only available for work connected with parsonages and their grounds.
 - They work to a schedule drawn up by the Property Manager, which is priority driven by the urgency of the works needed – not on a first come, first served basis.
 - If you require their services, you must first contact the Susan Rau, the Property Administrator.
 - They will only undertake work that they have been instructed to carry out after the Property Manager has consulted you.
 - Please do not embarrass them, or yourselves, by asking them to do other jobs "just whilst you're here...". If you have more than one job that needs doing they should be notified at the same time, so we can keep an accurate check on what work needs to be and has been done.
 - Remember, we try to act as quickly as possible to emergency situations – so just like any other contractor, jobs might have to be switched around at short notice. Wherever possible, we will aim to keep disruption to a minimum.

CONTACTS

The Archdeacon of Portsdown

The Ven Joanne Grenfell

313 Havant Road, Farlington, Portsmouth, PO6 1DD

Tel: 02392 899672

Mobile: 07833 430140

Email: joanne.grenfell@portsmouth.anglican.org

The Archdeacon of the Meon

The Ven Gavin Collins

Victoria Lodge, 36 Osborn Road, Fareham, PO16 7DS

Tel: 01329 608895

Mobile: 07500 117741

Email: gavin.collins@portsmouth.anglican.org

The Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight

The Ven Peter Sutton

5 The Boltons, Kite Hill, Wootton Bridge, PO33 4PB

Tel: 01983 884432

Mobile: 07717 418811

Email: peter.sutton@portsmouth.anglican.org

THE PROPERTY TEAM

Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager

Tel: 02392 899663

Email: property@portsmouth.anglican.org

Property Administrator

Mrs Susan Rau

Tel: 02392 899660

Email: susan.rau@portsmouth.anglican.org

DIOCESAN OFFICERS

Diocesan Secretary

The Revd Wendy Kennedy

Tel: 02392 899664

Email: wendy.kennedy@portsmouth.anglican.org

Deputy Diocesan Secretary and Head of Mission and Resources

Jenny Hollingsworth

Tel: 02392 899664

Email: jenny.hollingsworth@portsmouth.anglican.org

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