



GUIDELINES FOR THE MINISTRY OF RETIRED CLERGY WITH, OR SEEKING, PERMISSION TO OFFICIATE

Towards encouraging, supporting and understanding the relationships between Parish Clergy and Retired Clergy in the Diocese of Bristol

I Introduction

Retired clergy (whether formerly stipendiary or SSM) who live, or worship, in the Diocese of Bristol can now expect to have longer years of healthy retirement than ever before and many wish to continue in some form of active, post-retirement ministry. Many work successfully in ministerial roles in parishes, but the experience can be 'hit and miss' and can sometimes lead to frustration and under-utilisation of a valuable resource. These Guidelines are an attempt to put the relationships between retired clergy, parish clergy and the Diocese on a firmer foundation to the benefit of all.

2 Expectations and Responsibilities for Parish Clergy

- 2.1 When a member of the clergy retires to your parish, or you move into a parish where there is a retired priest, arrange to meet with them to discuss whether they would like to exercise ministry within the parish, but without assuming that this will be the case, so as to avoid any sense of pressure.
- 2.2 Remember that newly retired clergy are given six months to settle in to retirement before they apply for PTO, while they discern what kind of future ministry God might be calling them to.
- 2.3 In agreeing options, the parish needs to understand that the priest is retired and, if offering his/her services, then this will be as a volunteer, often with other commitments (such as family).
- 2.4 If a retired priest offers his/her services then it can be helpful to ascertain whether s/he is looking for regular opportunities for ministry or offering to be available for support where this might be needed. It may be that for reasons of church tradition (or other reasons) the retired priest seeks to offer to help elsewhere in the diocese. Such a choice should be respected.
- 2.5 If they are not aware of the existence of Diocesan Retirement Officers please let them know about this and give them contact details for the relevant officer (see Appendix 1 for details).
- 2.7 Be clear about financial matters such as expenses, and payments for funerals and weddings, and procedures for receiving these. Please see notes below for standard information.

- 2.8 Explore whether sharing in the regular prayer life of the clergy/ministry team/parish (as is appropriate to its tradition) would be beneficial and/or desired by both the retired clergy and the parish priest.
- 2.9 Consider appropriate ways of saying thank you to retired clergy for any ministry they offer – for example, an annual letter of thanks and token of gratitude (non-monetary) from the PCC is often very welcome.
- 2.10 If the retired priest wishes to minister within the parish you must check they have Permission to Officiate (PTO) from the Bishop of Bristol before they minister, and if that develops into a regular commitment, consider a licence. The Bishop's Chaplain can advise you. bishop.chaplain@bristoldiocese.org
- 2.11 Do check that a retired priest has access to information and updates about the life of the diocese, its aims, objectives, policies and procedures (especially if they are new to the diocese) – in particular, that they are subscribed to the Diocesan Monthly News (e-news).

3 Expectations and Responsibilities for Retired Clergy

- 3.1 When retiring into a parish it is both a courtesy and good practice to let the parish priest know who you are. Meeting with the parish priest to discuss what you may, or may not, wish to offer to the life of the parish is helpful to them and to you. It may be that your choice is to minister or worship in another parish (perhaps, for example, for reasons of tradition); it can be helpful for the parish priest to know this rather than discover it secondhand.
- 3.2 When first retired it has been found helpful to take a 'sabbatical' while you discern to what kind of future ministry God is calling you. We suggest that you apply for Permission to Officiate from six months after retirement.
- 3.3 In discussing your involvement with the parish priest it is important to understand the needs, vision and mission of the parish, and of course to remember that any area of ministry must have the agreement of the parish priest. Care should also be taken to respect the 'house style' of the parish.
- 3.4 Remember that, with PTO, a priest is acting as a volunteer and it is only those who are licensed that have a right to be on the PCC.
- 3.5 Do find out about financial matters such as expenses, payments for funerals and weddings and procedures for receiving these. Please see Appendix 2 for standard information or contact the Finance Department at the Diocesan Office for further details or questions.
- 3.6 Remember that to minister within a parish in this diocese, you need to have Permission to Officiate (PTO) or a licence from the Bishop of Bristol. (This will entail a DBS check and abiding by all safeguarding procedures and training requirements within the diocese). In both cases '*Guidelines for the professional conduct of the clergy*' apply.

- 3.7 There is a Retirement Officer for each Deanery. Please see below for relevant contact details. Information about the diocese, such as its aims, objectives, policies and procedures, are generally available via the diocesan website (www.bristol.anglican.org). However, please do not hesitate to contact your Deanery Retirement Officer if you can't find what you need. S/he may also be able to point you to other diocesan or national sources of advice and support for retired clergy.
- 3.8 The national church encourages us to use a licence with retired clergy who are based and wish to serve in a specific church. PTO is more flexible but carries less responsibility. Retirement is a time when clergy often find developing a 'Rule of Life' can be helpful. National research indicates that retired clergy who find their identity in being a child of God, rather than in their priesthood, fare better.

4 Expectations and Responsibilities for the Diocese

As we get older, our responsibility for our wellbeing and for those who depend on us changes, so retired clergy are encouraged not to take on too much. Retired clergy have the freedom to say no! Where appropriate, the diocese will enable retired clergy to apply for Permission to Officiate (PTO) from the Bishop of Bristol and to meet any safeguarding procedures in operation.

- 4.2 Clergy retiring into the diocese and seeking PTO or a Licence will initially be invited to meet with the relevant Area Dean.
- 4.3 The continuation of ministry by retired clergy into retirement is judged to be advantageous both to retired clergy and the diocese. The diocese will endeavour to promote the benefits and advantages of this relationship in a way that takes account both of the needs of the diocese and the wishes and gifting of individual retired clergy.
- 4.4 Where retired clergy choose to continue some form of ministry into retirement the diocese will provide relevant guidance, support and training to enable them to minister effectively both to the benefit of the diocese and for themselves.
- 4.5 Once retired clergy are not directly involved in the 'day to day' activities of the diocese they can find it difficult to keep in touch with any changes and developments that are taking place. This is an especially difficult challenge for those who move into the diocese on retirement. The diocese has readily available on its website detailed information on diocesan aims, objectives, policies and procedures, as well as regular communications via the monthly Diocesan News (e-newsletter).
- 4.6 Some deaneries include retired clergy in their Chapter, although this is not an expectation. Whether or not this is the case, the Bishop's Office will ensure all Area Deans are kept up to date with information on retired clergy within their deaneries who have PTO or hold a licence following relevant permissions under GDPR.

- 4.7 As part of its responsibilities towards retired clergy the Diocese appoints Clergy Retirement Officers to keep an overview of issues relating to retired clergy and act as a communication link between retired clergy, the Diocese and, where appropriate, the wider church. Please see below for details of current Officers.
- 4.8 The Diocese will seek to encourage good relationships between retired clergy and parish priests by promoting good practice and addressing any problems that may arise between retired clergy and parish priests, the Diocese or its staff.

Deanery Retirement Officers

| Deanery | Name | Contact details |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Bristol West | Margaret Morgan | 0117 962 2961 margaretemorgan@icloud.com |
| | Mrs Christine Burbridge | 0117 9504945 cburb71@gmail.com |
| | Revd Richard Burbridge | 0117 9504945 burbridge466@btinternet.com |
| Bristol South | VACANT, temporarily <i>Revd Richard Burbridge</i> | 0117 9504945 burbridge466@btinternet.com |
| City | Revd Jenny Low | 07730 594378 revjennylow@gmail.com |
| Kingswood & South Glos | Revd Judith Lee | 01454 772381 jrplee@btinternet.com |
| | Revd Philip Rowe | pwr2@hotmail.co.uk |
| North Wilts | Revd Alastair Davies | 01666 838636 alastair.davies@icloud.com |
| Chippenham | VACANT, temporarily <i>Revd Trevor Day</i> | 01793 875373, trevor.day@btinternet.com |
| Swindon | Revd Trevor Day | 01793 875373, trevor.day@btinternet.com |

Parochial fees and payment to SSMs, OLMs and LLMs

All those not in receipt of a stipend may choose to receive 80% of the ministry portion of the parochial fee for weddings and funerals.

Fees are received from parishes, monthly or at least quarterly, and we will make payment to those choosing to receive fees towards the end of the month following the month in which the service is taken. (Thus the fee for a service taken in June would be paid by us towards the end of July, provided of course that the parish has sent in the return, otherwise we will not know that the service has taken place.)

In order that we can have a record of whether or not you wish to receive the entitlement, please complete and return to the Diocesan Office the tear-off slip at the bottom of this note. Once you have chosen whether or not to receive, you can of course change your mind if your circumstances change. Please ring or email to fees@bristoldiocese.org the Finance Department at the Diocesan Office to advise us.

Any fees paid to you should be treated as gross income in the normal way for taxation purposes. You are responsible for declaring any fees you receive to HMRC via your annual tax return. If you do not currently complete a tax return, you should consult the HMRC website or ask for advice from a trusted Financial Adviser.

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Name

Address

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Post code

Parish relating to fees

I wish / do not wish (please delete as appropriate) to receive the agreed proportion of parochial fees for services taken by me.

I confirm that I will account to HMRC for any fees received.

Signed

Date

Bank Account details for payment

Sort code

Account no

Account name

Bank Name and Branch