



# LEICESTER DIOCESAN REGISTRY

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## REGISTRY UPDATE – APRIL 2020

### A very Happy Easter to you all!

We hope that you are all keeping well and discovering different ways of being church and living out your Faith. A lot has changed in a space of a few weeks, so we'll summarise changes here and for a bit of light relief, give an update on a few matters that were current before Covid-19 struck.

#### Covid-19 changes

##### Weddings

At the moment, no weddings may be held in church. It is possible that, if restrictions are lifted gradually, small weddings (e.g. the minister, bride, groom and two witnesses) may be permitted in churches prior to their being open for public worship.

- Those with part-heard banns can have their remaining banns heard once churches are open for public worship.
- Those wishing to marry prior to completion of their banns, or whose banns have not been heard, may apply for a Common Licence. Application forms are available from [registry@stoneking.co.uk](mailto:registry@stoneking.co.uk) The fee has been reduced to £50, to be reviewed on 01 August.
- One of the couple need to swear an oath in front of someone authorised to grant Common Licences (a Surrogate). This meeting cannot take place virtually. The Chancellor has approved the appointment of four Surrogates resident within the Diocese of Leicester.
- Couples relying on regular attendance at church for six months as their qualifying connection to the parish whose attendance has been interrupted by the ban on public worship:
  - provided that they resume as soon as services are able to resume, the 'gap' will still be capable of counting towards their 'habitual attendance at public worship for six months or more';
  - viewing live streamed or attending a virtual service is not sufficient to count towards their qualifying connection but couples are encouraged to participate in such services;
  - if they want to marry without finishing their six months attendance, they must apply to the Faculty Office [faculty.office@1thesanctuary.com](mailto:faculty.office@1thesanctuary.com) for a Special Licence. Faculty Office guidance states that it will be "*very sympathetic where couples have shown a willingness and commitment to create a qualifying connection with their chosen church and have been prevented from doing so solely due to the suspension of public worship.*"
- Weddings may proceed in a hospital, hospice or at home where one of the parties is terminally ill (whether through Covid-19 or otherwise) by Special Licence.

- Couples where one or both are not EEA or Swiss citizens must contact their local Register Office and enquire about a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate.

## Funerals

The Diocese has issued a guide: '[Funerals during Covid-19 Outbreak](#)' and have agreed to waive all funeral fees that would otherwise be payable to the DBF under the Parochial Fees Order.

## APCMs and PCCs

APCMs cannot take place during the current restrictions. The time for electing churchwardens and holding APCMs has been extended to 31 October. Please see the instrument signed by Bishop Martyn on the [Diocesan website](#), together with the explanatory notes. The notes set out the periods of extension of current Officers' posts and also the position if you held your APCM prior to 17 March. So far as PCC meetings are concerned, guidance has been issued about remote meetings [here](#) (FAQs).

## Public Notices

- The Chancellor has dispensed with the need to display the notice inside the church but it is still necessary to display the notice outside the church/churchyard.
- Where practicable, a copy of the notice must be displayed on any WhatsApp or other social media used by the PCC in providing information to parishioners.
- You must send a copy of the public notice to any person whom you may reasonably believe might wish to oppose or comment upon the petition.

## Other news

- **Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2019** On 31 March DAC Secretary Rupert Allen circulated an updated note on how the faculty process works in this Diocese and the new Lists A and B, following the changes that came into force on 01 April. We recommend you keeping these documents to hand whilst you get used to the changes.
- **Guidance on duty to have regard to House of Bishops safeguarding statement** The Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 imposes a legal duty on the clergy, readers, lay workers, churchwardens and PCCs to "*have due regard to guidance issued by the House of Bishops on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults*". There has been much debate about what 'to have due regard' means. Until the outcome of a review of clergy discipline legislation, the Legal Office of the National Church Institutions has stated what the position is. The full note can be read on the [Church of England website](#).
- **General Synod highlights**
  - The 'Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing' was affirmed: your PCCs will be invited to adopt the covenant and commit to sharing responsibility for the welfare of ministers and their households.
  - The Church of England intends to draw up a plan of action to achieve its target of net zero emissions by 2030 and will ask parishes to play their part
- **Marriage registers – still no news...** As far as we know The General Register Office is currently working on the secondary legislation, IT systems and administrative processes that are required to implement the marriage schedule system. Once we know more, we shall re-schedule training that had been optimistically set for the end of this month...