



**DIOCESE OF LEICESTER**

# **Clergy Housing Guide**

For occupants of parsonage and other diocesan owned properties.

**Updated and ratified by the Houses Management Committee December 2019.**

**Modified October 2020.**

## **FOREWORD:**

**Welcome to the Diocese of Leicester.** This guide has been updated and ratified by the Houses Management Committee and contains information and advice so that you and your family can enjoy your clergy home. Please keep it in a handy place.

Our aim is to use the housing budget fairly, equitably and wisely to provide a good standard of accommodation.

Upkeep of the property is a shared responsibility between the Diocese, clergy family and parish (please see Page 16 for a quick overview of who is responsible for what). The Diocese takes the lion's share of responsibility and maintains the structure and fabric of the building and the services to it. This includes such things as general repairs and maintenance, improvement works, payment of council tax, water rates and buildings insurance, etc. The occupant has a duty to take care of the house and gardens and to act as a good steward for the duration of their tenure and the parish plays an important role during vacancy and leading up to the arrival of the new clergy occupant.

If you have any concerns about your clergy home please get in touch with the property team who will be glad to do what they can to help.

Mrs Nicky Caunt.  
Senior Property Manager.

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## **HOUSES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE:**

### **Objective:**

The primary objective of the Houses Management Committee is to facilitate fulfilment of the Diocesan Mission Purpose by ensuring that housing provided for Diocesan clergy is of a good standard. The Committee carries out the functions of the Leicester Diocesan Board of Finance in its role as the Houses Management Committee for the Diocese of Leicester under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1976 ("the Measure") and this includes such things as:

- Monitoring the state of repair of clergy and licensed lay workers' houses.
- Carrying out repairs and improvements where they are either necessary or desirable.
- Ensuring quinquennial and interregnum works are carried out efficiently and effectively.
- Payment of Council Tax and Water Rates.
- Managing all of the above within the allocated houses budget.
- Surplus housing and the purchase of additional housing are not in the remit of the Committee, although the Committee may recommend that specific houses should be replaced, where they are considered either inappropriate and/or too expensive to maintain.

Membership comprises the Archdeacons (one of whom acts as chair), a parish priest, a clergy spouse and the Senior Property Manager. The group meets four times a year.

A **Houses Strategic Group**, deals with such things as:

- Decisions about the acquisition and disposal of houses (including responding to recommendations from the Houses Management Committee).
- Policy and the decision-making process about alternative uses for houses not required for use by clergy in pursuance of their ministerial duties.
- Any policy issues and special cases referred to it by the Houses Management Committee. In respect of the latter, final decisions are made by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Finance, taking account of policy and recommendations from the group.

Membership comprises the Chair and two other members of Finance Cttee and an Archdeacon, with the Director of Finance, Senior Property Manager and a member of Mission & Ministry in attendance. The group meets at least twice a year.

## MEET THE TEAM:

**PROPERTY DEPARTMENT:** The Property Department is based at St Martins House, No.7 Peacock Lane, Leicester, LE1 5PZ. Office Hours are 8.30am – 4.30pm Mondays to Fridays. In the case of an **emergency** please refer to: [www.leicester.anglican.org/info-for-leaders/clergy-info/property/property](http://www.leicester.anglican.org/info-for-leaders/clergy-info/property/property)

**Senior Property Manager:** Mrs Nicky Caunt (nicky.caunt@covlec.org)  
Telephone: 0116 261 5316

*Nicky's role is to oversee the efficient management of the property portfolio. Please contact Nicky should you wish to discuss strategic or general housing matters.*

### **Clergy Housing Officer:**

Mrs Dinta Chauhan (dinta.chauhan@covlec.org)  
Telephone: 0116 261 5316

*Dinta is the first point of contact for day to day maintenance and repairs*

### **Property Officer:**

Miss Lesley Whitwell (lesley.whitwell@covlec.org)  
Telephone: 0116 261 5315

*Lesley provides admin and project management support related to housing, lets, council tax & pastoral schemes.*

### **Diocesan Surveyor:**

Martin Stallard of YMD Boon Ltd (MStallard@YMDboon.co.uk)  
Telephone: 01858 464482/0773 498 0368

*Martin is an external resource and assists the Property Department in managing the housing stock and oversees quinquennial & interregnum work and improvements.*

## **MOVING IN:**

Welcome! Once your appointment has been announced, please contact the churchwarden(s) to arrange to see the house again should you wish to do so.

Necessary internal works will be carried out prior to your arrival. External works may have been deferred to coincide with the quinquennial if it is due.

Please contact the Senior Property Manager to discuss property matters and to confirm your move date.

Leading up to your move, or once you have moved in, please take meter readings, notify Dinta, and arrange for the utilities (gas, electricity & telephone) to be transferred to your name. If there is an oil fired boiler then you should check to see if you need to arrange a delivery of oil.

Please contact the property department who will arrange for a suitably qualified contractor to connect/disconnect your gas or electric cooker.

The Diocese is responsible for Council Tax and Water Rates. Any communication regarding these should be forwarded to the Property Department. Please remember to notify the Property Department of any changes in circumstance which may affect the level of Council Tax i.e. single occupancy, disability etc.

The Diocese arranges buildings insurance cover and you are responsible for any contents insurance.

## **WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY:**

The Property Department is available during working hours (8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday) to give advice on the maintenance and upkeep of your home. For out of hours' assistance you may contact:-

**Plumbing/Heating:** East Goscote Plumbers 0116 260 7766 (Plumber 0776 660 2180/Heating 0776 660 2181).

**General Building:** James Construction (Jim Collins 0758 117 7739).

**Electrical:** A.R.Smith & Sons Ltd 0116 262 1874.

**Drainage:** Harborough Drainage 01858 468084

**Trees:** Longfield Tree & Hedge Care (Tom Bale) 07710 451375

**Glazing Repairs:** Give Us A Break Windows 0116 262 5755.

**Diocesan Surveyor:** Martin Stallard 0773 498 0368.

Please contact the Property Department on 0116 261 5316 at the earliest opportunity to notify them when you have accessed out of hours assistance.

### **Emergency Plumbing Issues:**

If you think you have frozen pipes then follow the guidance on the Severn Trent website:

<https://www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/faqs/what-do-i-do-if-i-think-my-pipes-are-frozen/>. Burst Pipes: Turn off the stop tap and open all cold water taps.

### **In the case of a fire:**

Get everyone out of the building and stay out. If possible, close all doors and windows behind you to delay fire spreading. Dial the Fire Service immediately on 999.

If you need to open a closed door, check to see whether it feels hot first. If it does, there may be fire behind it.

**Emergency information continued on next page:-**

**Plan a Fire Escape Route:**

Plan what you would do if there were a fire in your home and always keep the escape routes clear.

Make sure everyone in your home is familiar with the escape plan.

If the main exit from your home locks with a key make sure the key is always easily accessible and everyone in your household knows where it's kept.

You can find more detailed advice on the Fire Service website: <https://www.fireservice.co.uk/>

**In the case of a gas leak:**

If you significantly smell gas, turn off the gas lever at the mains (next to the gas meter) by pulling the lever down.

Do not operate electrical switches – on or off - as a spark could ignite the gas.

Immediately, put out any naked flames and cigarettes and open windows and doors.

Ring the local gas emergency telephone number: 0800 111 999.

You can find more detailed gas advice on the following website: <http://www.nationalgridgas.com/safety-and-emergencies>



## **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES AND PRACTICES:**

**ASBESTOS:** An asbestos survey has been/or is due to be carried out on your home (if built pre-1999). A copy of the report is held by the Property Department and the Diocesan Surveyors, YMD Boon Ltd. Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) in good condition or undisturbed are not hazardous to health. The condition of all suspect materials will be monitored.

**CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS:** A carbon monoxide (CO) detector should be present in any room containing a boiler, gas fire, open fire or log/coal burner. If this is not the case, please notify the Property Department who will reimburse you for the purchase of up to two 10year long life detectors. Please test the detectors weekly.

**ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKS:** Electrical Installation Condition Inspections are carried out by NICEIC qualified contractors as part of Quinquennial and Interregnum works. No electrical work should be carried out unless commissioned by the Property Department. Please report electrical concerns immediately.

**GAS/OIL BOILER & GAS FIRE SAFETY INSPECTIONS:** Annual safety checks and servicing are arranged by the Property Department. East Goscote Plumbers are the appointed contractors and will contact you to agree a convenient time to visit. Please ensure you respond to their request for access. Any problems with your boiler or fire between services should be reported to the Property Department.

**PONDS:** Occupants are discouraged from creating ornamental ponds in gardens. If a pond already exists the Property Department will arrange to have it filled in upon request. Should you choose to retain a pond then you will be responsible for its maintenance and for the safety of anyone around it.

**SMOKE DETECTORS:** Your property should be fitted with two alarms – one on each floor of the house. These are either battery operated or hard wired. The Property Department is responsible for any necessary replacement and repair but regular checking/testing and battery maintenance is the responsibility of the occupant. Please test the detectors weekly.

**TREES:** Large trees are the responsibility of the Property Department and are managed as part of the Quinquennial work programme. Occupiers are requested to monitor trees in the garden and to report any concerns to the Property Department. Ornamental trees, fruit trees, hedges and shrubs are the responsibility of occupants and should be pruned as part of regular garden maintenance. Some trees are subject to a local Tree Preservation Order which means that they may not be pruned or cut down without permission.

## **A – Z OF PROPERTY POLICIES:**

**Alterations:** Alterations to the house require the consent of the Property Department beforehand.

**Bathrooms:** Bathrooms will be replaced when they may be more sensibly replaced than repaired.

**Mirror:** Provided in family bathroom.

**Shaver Point:** One point is provided as standard.

**Shower:** A shower (usually Mira Sport electric) is provided. Consideration would be given to the provision of a separate shower cubicle if a shower over an existing bath was impractical.

**Shower Curtain:** A rail is provided where it is not possible to provide a shower screen. Shower curtains are the responsibility of the occupant.

**Toilet Roll Holders & Towel Rails:** Provided as standard.

**Bats:** Bats are a protected species. If you discover them at your property, please notify the Property Department without delay.

**Boundaries:** There should be no encroachment onto or from the property. Any boundary queries should be referred to the Property Department.

**Fences:** The DBF will provide boundary fencing to all vicarages. Where a public right of way runs through a clergy property it will be securely fenced off to prevent members of the public straying into the garden. Fencing is not provided for pet enclosure.

The maintenance and repair of fences is the responsibility of the Property Department unless the boundary belongs to a neighbouring property. Occupants are not to plant trees and shrubs in such a position that they are likely to damage fences or obstruct access and self-set bushes and ivy should be removed before they become established.

**Hedges:** These are the responsibility of the occupant. The Property Department may consider undertaking work on tall beech or coniferous hedges but occupants are expected to trim all hedges on a regular basis to avoid the need for costly work.

**Burglaries:** Should you be unfortunate enough to experience a burglary, these are the steps to follow:

- Notify the police immediately and get a crime number.
- Contact the Property Department on 0116 261 5316.
- Notify the Archdeacon.
- Contact your contents insurance provider.
- If it is outside office hours then you may take reasonable steps to instruct urgent repairs and send the invoice to the Property Department for reimbursement.

**Carpets:** Carpets are occupant responsibility. If there is a trip hazard, particularly on the stairs then the diocese may meet the cost of repair or replacement (this would not extend to the landing and hall). Vinyl floor covering is provided in the kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, bathroom and WC.

**Central Heating:** Gas or oil central heating is provided as standard and servicing and maintenance falls to the Diocese. The occupant is responsible for ensuring that:

- radiators are bled of air periodically <https://www.uswitch.com/energy-saving/guides/how-to-bleed-a-radiator/>
- the boiler is not switched off during cold months.
- the oil supply does not get too low or run out.

**Chimneys:** The occupant will be reimbursed for an annual sweep of the chimney (where a stove or open fire is in use).

**Condensation & Mould:** Condensation occurs when warm moist air comes into contact with a cold surface and left unnoticed can form mould growth. The direct cause of condensation can be a combination of a low air temperature, high humidity and poor ventilation. Always keep the house well ventilated, particularly kitchens and bathrooms and, if condensation mould does occur, ventilate the room and clean off the mould with a fungicidal wash or a household bleach solution (taking appropriate care in doing so).

**Conservatories:** The Property Department does not install conservatories. Where there is one in existence, then it will be maintained unless the surveyor recommends its removal.

**Cookers:** The provision of a cooker, whether free standing or built in, is the responsibility of the occupant including its

maintenance and repair. If a vicar decides to change the cooker then it must be installed by an approved contractor. If this proves difficult then please contact the property department for advice to arrange for a suitably qualified contractor to connect/disconnect your gas or electric cooker. If a built-in oven or hob breaks down, the Property Department will arrange to remove it and re-configure the space for a standard 600mm free standing appliance.

### **Cooker Hoods (see Extractors):**

**Cracks:** Cracks in plaster are usually due to shrinkage and should be dealt with as part of the internal redecoration. Cracks which appear to be structural (e.g. in brick or stonework, usually appearing on both the inner and outer faces of the wall) may be due to subsidence and should be reported to the Property Department without delay.

**Curtains and Blinds:** These are occupant responsibility.

**Curtain Tracks:** Standard 'Swish' type tracks are provided.

**Day-to-Day Repairs:** Occupants are expected to carry out minor (non-electrical) repairs costing less than £100 at their own expense provided that they feel competent to do so. For all other repairs, please contact the Property Department.

**Decorations (external):** The Property Department will organize external decorations as part of the Quinquennial programme.

**Decorations (internal):** If necessary, the Property Department will decorate in neutral colours the Hall, Stairs and Landing at the start of the occupancy. Occupants may carry out internal decoration as required/desired. PCCs are encouraged to contribute to the cost of those parts of the house which could be considered 'public', i.e. study and downstairs cloakroom.

**Dishwashers:** Plumbing connections for dishwashers will be provided as standard.

**Door Bells:** A battery operated door bell will be supplied if requested. Batteries are occupant responsibility.

### **Drains:**

- avoid pouring fatty substances down the sink.
- do not flush items down the lavatory that can cause a blockage.
- do not pour forbidden substances into the drains that could enter water courses, e.g. oil or paint.
- keep clear of debris, leaves and silt.
- in the event of a blockage contact the Property Department.

**Drives and Paths:** Drives and pathways will be inspected during the Quinquennial inspection and any necessary repairs carried out. Occupants are requested to help control costs by keeping drives and paths free from weeds.

**Dustbins:** All bins (refuse, recycling & garden waste), and costs associated with them, are the responsibility of the occupant.

**Electric Vehicle Charging Points:** The houses budget will contribute towards costs associated with electric vehicle charging point installation provided that availability of grant funding had been fully explored.

**Extractors:** Extractor fans are provided in kitchens and some bathrooms and require regular cleaning by the user to keep them working effectively. Please notify the Property Department if faulty.

**Garages/Parking:** A house will normally have a garage but not always. The Diocese is not obliged to provide parking for second cars, caravans, boats etc.

**Gardens:** Occupants are responsible for routine garden maintenance and are expected to keep their gardens in good order. This includes the maintenance of hedges, pruning of fruit trees and similar work.

**Ivy:** Removal of long standing Ivy growth from boundary walls can destabilise them leading to costly repairs. Guidance should be sought from the Property Department or at the Quinquennial Inspection before undertaking such work. Please do not plant or set ivy to grow up buildings or walls.

**Japanese Knotweed:** This plant is extremely invasive and can cause serious damage to buildings. Please notify the Property Department if you spot it growing in the garden or vicinity.

**Garden Sheds & Greenhouses:** Occupant responsibility.

**Gutters:** Repairs and maintenance are the responsibility of the Property Department. Occupants are asked to arrange for a local contractor to clear gutters once a year and arrange reimbursement by the Property Department.

**Improvements:** Improvements are noted during Quinquennial and Interregnum Inspections and carried out on a priority basis. Requests for improvements from occupants will be considered by the Houses Management Committee. If an occupant feels that there are pastoral reasons for a particular improvement to be prioritized they should contact the Archdeacon.

**Infestation:** Occupants should take measures to avoid anything that would attract vermin. Infestation by mice, rats, wasps, flies or other pests should be reported to the Property Department immediately.

**Insulation:** Cavity wall insulation is considered in properties where the construction permits. Loft insulation and lagging are provided as standard.

**Locks (Door):** A 3 or 5-lever external lock is provided as standard to the front door.

**Locks (Window):** Locks to easily accessible windows may be provided as necessary.

**Lofts:** Items may be stored in the loft where flooring is provided but it is important that the loft is not overloaded and that weight is spread as evenly as possible. A loft ladder and light will be provided as standard.

**Parish Office/Meeting Rooms:** The property must **not** be used as a parish office or meeting room.

**Pets:** Occupants are expected to exercise common sense in their choice of animals with particular regard for the maintenance of the property and relations with neighbours. The Property Department is not responsible for provision of additional fencing for pet enclosure nor does it provide cat/dog flaps. Please contact the property department if you wish to install a cat/dog flap.

**Planning Applications:** Please advise the Property Department of any planning applications that are submitted concerning neighbouring properties.

**Quinquennial Inspections:** The Diocesan Surveyor will inspect the property every five years and schedule a programme of repairs and external decoration. A copy of the Quinquennial Report is sent to occupiers who may make representations to the Property Department if they consider that the schedule does not cover all necessary work. Repairs will be carried out in line with the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure but improvements will be subject to Houses Management Committee procedures.

**Rights of Way:** Occupants are asked to ensure that members of the public are not able to walk or drive across their gardens regularly other than using the appointed route to the front door. Long term use may establish rights of way by prescription.

**Security Alarms/Lighting:** Security Alarms are provided as standard and the Houses Management Committee assumes responsibility for annual servicing and maintenance. Security lighting is provided as standard and replacement of low level bulbs is the responsibility of the occupant.

**Septic Tanks:** Occupants are responsible for arranging the emptying of septic tanks but the invoices should be sent to the Property Department for payment.

**Shelving:** Study shelving to a maximum of 30m or according to the size and shape of the study is provided as standard. Occupants may add shelving at their own expense but should take care not to damage features, electrical cables etc. If additional shelving is added by the occupant, and is removed on departure, any consequential damage or decoration is to be made good by the occupant.

**Sub-Letting:** Sub-letting any part of the property is not permitted.

**Telephone Points:** A telephone point is provided in the study with a second point for family use elsewhere in the house – extensions or additional lines may be fitted at the expense of the occupant. Telephone bills are the responsibility of the occupant.

**Television Aerials and Satellite Dishes:** A standard aerial is provided.

**Washing Machines:** Plumbing for washing machines is provided as standard.

**Washing Line/Rotary:** Occupant responsibility.

**Woodblock Flooring:** Sanding, polishing and staining wood floors are the responsibility of the occupant.

**Wood Burners (multi-fuel):** The Houses Management Committee does not encourage the use of multi fuel stoves and will support requests to remove such appliances, funds permitting.

## QUICK OVERVIEW OF WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT:

<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Clergy Occupant</b>
General repairs and maintenance	Minor repairs (up to £100)
Interregnum/Quinquennial Inspections and subsequent works	Organising annual gutter clearance (cost reimbursed by Property Department)
Cooker Installation/Removal	Provision of cooker and maintenance/service
Annual gas/oil servicing and subsequent works	Annual sweeping of chimneys
5 yearly electrical safety checks	Provision of appliances, shower curtain, rotary lines
Improvement works	
Security alarm replacements	
Reimbursement of smoke/carbon monoxide detectors	Supply of 2 x smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in any room where there is a gas appliance or open fire or stove (cost to be reimbursed)
Telephone points x 2	Broadband/cable
Standard TV aerial	
Major tree works	Gardening, pruning and patio cleaning
Provision and repair of boundary fences	Pet proofing the garden
External decoration 5 yearly Hall, stairs & landing during vacancy (if required)	Cleaning & Internal decorating
Vinyl flooring to kitchen, utility, bathroom, WC	Carpeting throughout
Payment of council tax, water rates & buildings insurance	Payment for gas, electricity, oil usage & contents insurance
<b>Parish</b>	
Care for the house & garden during vacancy	
Paying for the telephone line rental charges during a vacancy if the number is to be retained	
Cleaning the house/tidying the garden for the arrival of the new clergy family	
Decorating public areas i.e. entrance porch, study & WC	



## **MOVING OUT:**

So long, farewell! Once you know you are leaving then please notify the Property Department who will send Guidelines on vacating clergy property. Costs incurred by the diocese to redecorate or repair/replace floor covering, other than fair wear and tear, will be recharged to the occupant.

**Please leave the house** clean and completely empty (including garages and outhouses), and remove PCC/parish related items such as photocopiers, files etc.

**Heating:** during colder months please leave the heating set continually at 15°C and open the loft hatch to circulate warm air in the roof space. If the system is oil fired then please tell the Property Department if the oil supply is low.

**Cookers:** Please contact the property department who will arrange for a suitably qualified GasSafe or NICEIC registered contractor to connect/disconnect your gas or electric cooker.

**Telephone:** Please ask the parish if the telephone number is to be retained. Line costs and other telephone charges during a vacancy fall to the parish.

**Utilities:** Notify gas and electricity providers of the final meter readings and let the Property Department have a copy of the readings and the providers' details. Please also ask the utility companies to address correspondence to: Coventry DBF, The Property Department, St Martins House, 7 Peacock Lane, Leicester LE1 5PZ.

**Redirecting the post:** Occupants are responsible for arranging the re-direction of mail with the Post Office and ensuring the parish set up re-directions for any parish mail that comes to the vicarage on a regular basis. Should mail be delivered when the property is vacant it should be collected by a Churchwarden or parish representative and, if appropriate, sent to the Property Department.

**Contents:** Built in appliances, log burners, shelving and any flooring provided by the Diocese should not be removed from the property.

**Securing the house:** On the day of departure please ensure that the house is secure (please do not lock internal doors) and hand over keys to the churchwarden(s) with the alarm code.