

FAQs Funeral services in Church, and Memorial Services

Funeral services

Can one church locally be used to hold the services for others? How would the payment of fees work? Who needs to be involved?

One church can host a service for another parish and the permission of the incumbent is required for another minister to conduct the service. Clear communication between churches and with funeral directors and families is vital at every stage. If this is likely to happen regularly with one church hosting the funeral services for others, a clear local arrangement will need to be agreed which would include how the booking process would work. A funeral taking place in another parish church does not imply any other rights of burial etc.

The latest guidance for funerals does not encourage the presence of a verger sound operator, organist etc. Please note that this is advisory. It is a local decision regarding who can be available for funerals, especially taking into account how the service can be managed to enable social distancing.

Fees

Under Section 1(7) of the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986, the following would happen, regarding fees. For example:

Church A – holding the service would invoice the funeral director for the service only: DBF fee + PCC fee + local expenses, including if able to justify the cost – additional cleaning for/after the church service.

Church B – who can't currently hold the service – would invoice the funeral director for the service afterwards (DBF fee for the crematorium (and possibly fees for the burial of ashes on a subsequent occasion if required), OR DBF + PCC for a full burial elsewhere to Church A, PLUS travel expenses for the minister)

The statutory PCC fee of £91 for the church service is to help cover costs of the building and it cannot be shared. Parish B has no out goings for the church service. However Parish A can make a donation to the work in parish B to use for the same objectives as Parish A – i.e. the general purposes of the Church of England and cure of souls in the other parish. It is a charitable gift from one charity to another, as a sign of generosity. Any donation would have to be agreed by the paying PCC (Parish A), not by the incumbent alone, and would be a local and voluntary decision. Whatever is decided it would not be a material sum. The £30 from the DBF fee for a cremation only service will be reinstated as before.

Collections

Care would need to be taken with regard to arrangements for collections at the service. These are first in line with the family wishes – with the permission of the incumbent in charge of the parish – or if general donations it could be agreed to be split or donated to the church or parish of the deceased. There is flexibility here unless the family wishes all the collection and it is agreed to be honoured to a third party.

Funeral directors

Another email has been sent, using details of the funeral directors provided by deaneries, to inform them regarding the change in DBF fees from 1st July. Any local arrangements regarding which churches are able to host funeral services should be communicated to them directly.

Memorial services and fees

The fees table includes provision for this top right in the small print, and at the moment there is no additional guidance on this question.

The Archbishops' Council recommends that, where a memorial service is on a similar scale to a funeral service, or a service of blessing and dedication following a civil marriage or a renewal of marriage vows is on a scale equivalent to a wedding service, the PCC fee should be based on the statutory fee for the service, with the PCC receiving the equivalent of the combined DBF and PCC fee.