

GUIDELINES FOR VACANCY SUPPORT FUND (SEQUESTRATION) - 2017

This new Diocesan fund is designed to support parishes where there is a vacancy or extended absence of a stipendiary clergy person. It expands the old Sequestration Fund and support to parishes to reflect the changes in legislation regarding fees and also the more complex nature of posts following the exercise on Deployment.

APPLICATION FOR SUPPORT

Parishes may make an application for support from this fund if they satisfy any of the following criteria:

- Interregnum
- Vacancy of stipendiary clergy within the Team
- Stipendiary Clergy on extended Study Leave
- Stipendiary Clergy on extended Sick Leave
- Where an Interim Minister is in place

Application should be to the Finance Department at St Mary's House, for support from this fund.

HOW DOES THE FUND OPERATE?

Income

Since the changes in legislation concerning Ecclesiastical Fees, effective from 1 January 2013, fee income should no longer be retained by parishes in vacancy within the Sequestration Fund (see Annexe 1). The PCC element of the fees for occasional services and monuments should continue to be retained by the PCC and recorded as fee income. The DBF element of the fees should be collected and remitted in full to the Diocese, with the following exceptions:

- House for Duty retain their full fee
- Retired Stipendiary Clergy should be paid 2/3rds of the DBF fee with the balance remitted to the Diocese

Expenditure

Due to the changes in Accounting Rules and Regulations, it is no longer permissible to net or offset expenditure against income. Therefore, the creation of the Fund is to support parishes where additional costs are incurred due to the absence of Stipendiary Clergy, or where an Interim Minister has been deployed. In simple terms it supports relevant expenditure only

PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

If the application to this Fund is successful, then the Diocese will provide an initial float of £500 to enable parishes to cover services and discharge their responsibilities.

(a) Retired Clergy

- (i) For ordinary services fees are payable as shown in the Table of Fees given at the end of these Notes.
- (ii) For other services, e.g. weddings, funerals, fees are payable in accordance with the current Diocesan Policy. With effect from 01 January 2017, retired stipendiary clergy retain 2/3rds of the DBF Fee, the remaining one third is due to the DBF and should therefore be remitted to the Diocese. In the case of a House for Duty Minister the full DBF fee is due to the Minister. Statutory fees are revised annually and advised by the Church Commissioners. The fees with effect from 1st January 2017 are enclosed.

(b) Lay Readers/OLM and NSM (SSM)

The PCC are responsible for the payment of the travel expenses at the recommended diocesan rate, of visiting lay readers, and are able to reclaim this amount from the Fund.. No fee is payable. Please also see the Diocesan Ministerial Fees and Expenses: A Clergy Code of Practice on the Diocesan website

(c) Stipendiary Clergy in full-time or part-time Church or secular work

- (i) No fee is payable for ordinary services.
- (ii) For other services, e.g. weddings, funerals, the appropriate fee in accordance with the current scale should be remitted to the Diocese

(d) All Categories

Travelling expenses are payable in all cases. For a private car the rate is as shown in the Table of Fees.

Payment for services, etc., due to PCC's should be made in accordance with the current Scale of Fees and handed to the appropriate PCC official if the officer is not available to collect them in person. These funds should be paid direct into the PCC account.

Please ensure all payments are made by cheque DO NOT make cash payments and a receipt issued.

Expenditure chargeable to the fund only applies to areas of expenditure that have occurred due to the vacancy. Additional costs such as Organist fees or Vergers fees should not be included.

ACCOUNTING

(a) Initial Action

The PCC are responsible for maintaining a simple income and expenditure account in respect of Vacancy Support Funds, within the normal PCC books. This Fund should be shown in the annual accounts in full as income (DBF reimbursement only) and expenditure (costs claimed or due to be claimed from the Fund) with no offsetting.

(b) Subsequent Action

When applying to the Diocesan Office for further funds, an up-to-date statement of accounts should be forwarded. A final statement, together with any balance in the Fund should be forwarded when the vacancy is ended. Any outstanding claim should be made within three months of the Vacancy ending and likewise any funds due back to the DBF should be paid within the same time frame.

Table of Fees

Fee for regular services from 1st Jan 2017 payable to retired stipendiary clergy not in Church or Secular employment	£49.00
Travelling allowance per mile until 5 April 2016	45p
from 6 April 2017	45p

Contact Details

The Diocesan Office
St. Mary's House
The Close
Lichfield
WS13 7LD

Tel: 01543 306030

Fax: 01543 306039

Finance Matters

Sue Schulz
01543 306057
Sue.schulz@lichfield.anglican.org

Diocesan Website

www.lichfield.anglican.org/chadnet/finance

These are some frequently asked questions, to try to help you determine where expenses should be paid from:

	Vacancy Fund	PCC	LDBF Property department	LDBF Finance department
Grass cutting at vicarage and general tidying of garden	X			
Landscaping of garden or cutting back of trees and hedges/fencing			X	
Rental on telephone account to keep line open for next vicar		x		
Electricity and gas bills for vicarage during interregnum until heating systems have been drained down			X	
Cost of draining down heating system			x	
	Vacancy Fund	PCC	LDBF Property	LDBF Finance

			department	department
If the vicarage is to be used by the Parish during Interregnum for whatever reason, all heating and lighting costs		x		
Replacement bathroom or kitchen to make vicarage suitable for new vicar			X	
Interior Decoration – the diocese operates an IDS		X		X
Exterior Decoration			X	
Exterior and Interior repairs and maintenance	Contact the Diocese	X	X	X
Costs of clergy to cover services during interregnum	X			
Travelling expenses of visiting clergy	x			
Occasional service fees for clergy outside the diocese or of other denominations				X – please contact the diocesan office
Cost of advertising for new vicar		X		
Costs of organists, vergers etc at services		X		
	Vacancy Fund	PCC	LDBF Property	LDBF Finance

			department	department
Costs of service booklets for new vicar				X – submit with the collection for the Bishops Ordination Fund
Alarm costs at vicarage			x	
Water rates and council tax bills for vicar				X
Wine, candles and wafers for services		X		

ANNEX 1

DUTIES OF SEQUESTRATORS

The main duties of the Sequestrators are to act as the Bishop's Agents to ensure that :

- (a) the services and other ministrations of the Church are provided ;
- (b) the parsonage house and any other property of the benefice are taken care of;
- (c) the appointed Diocesan Agents for Glebe property (and the Secretary of the Diocesan Glebe Committee) are advised whenever any matter affecting Glebe property requires attention;
- (d) fees due to the Incumbent are collected and paid into the sequestration account
- (e) fees due to the PCC in the absence of the appropriate PCC official are collected.

CARE OF PARSONAGE HOUSES

- (a) Immediate Action

As soon as the house becomes unoccupied, Sequestrators are requested to ensure that the water, gas and electricity supplies are turned off at the mains.

- (b) Bad Weather Precautions

During winter months heating installations should be drained down. This should be carried out by a qualified contractor and advice should be obtained from the Property Department at St. Mary's House. Any charges will be borne by the Diocese and a separate invoice should be submitted to Andy Mason at the Diocesan Office.

(c) Local Authority Relief

To ensure that Local Authority relief is claimed when houses are empty, Sequestrators should inform both the Diocesan Office and the Local Authority as soon as the house becomes vacant and when it is re-occupied.

(d) The Garden

The parsonage garden should be maintained in a clean and tidy condition. If possible, voluntary labour should be used for this purpose. Otherwise care should be taken to limit expenditure on this account as far as practicable. In case of doubt, the Archdeacon or Rural Dean should be consulted.

(e) House Security, Repair and Maintenance

It is important that Sequestrators should visit the house frequently (daily if possible), and report to the Police and the Secretary of the Benefice Buildings Committee any signs of vandalism or break-in.

If repair and maintenance of vacant parsonage houses is required, reference should be made to the Property Department (Tel: 01543 306051). If the matter is urgent then an out of office number will be left on the aforementioned number.

(f) Letting

The Bishop of the Diocese may with the consent of the Church Commissioners authorise the Sequestrators, if they think fit, to let out the parsonage house. Such a move might, for example, be considered desirable to ensure that the property was less open to vandalism and that some income could be generated. In such circumstances the Sequestrators must consult the Archdeacon and the Secretary to the Benefice Buildings Committee before entering into any tenancy agreements.

Housing Matters

Mr Andy Mason
andy.mason@lichfield.anglican.org
Tel: 01543 306051

Charles Glenn
charles.glenn@lichfield.anglican.org
01543 306222

Simon Ray (Maintenance)
simon.ray@lichfield.anglican.org
01543 306071



The Church of England **around Staffordshire, northern Shropshire and the Black Country**
