



Diocese of Newcastle

Changes to Fees from January 2013

Clergy will know that from 1st January 2013 there are some changes to the way that the fees system works in the Church of England. Each diocese is required to develop its own policy and way of working with the new fees order.

The key features of the changes are:

- There is a general rise in fee level for both weddings and funerals
- The present incumbent's fee will become the Newcastle Diocesan Board of Finance's (NDBF) fee but the PCC fee remains
- The fee for a funeral at a crematorium will now include a fee for the PCC
- For a burial in a cemetery or a cremation following a service in church a new NDBF fee is introduced.
- There are new arrangements for the payment of fees to retired clergy through the parish priest or PCC
- No fees are payable for the funeral of a child under 16 years
- There is greater clarity concerning what extra fees may be charged by the PCC for weddings and funerals

Following consultations by the Archdeacons with Area Deans and the Bishop's Council the following proposals are made which we are confident will offer benefits to both parochial clergy and also to Funeral Directors in how the fees system is operated.

1. Although the legal ownership of the incumbent's fee is changing from incumbent to NDBF we are proposing that the flow of fees remains the same as it is now. This is because the large majority of clergy assign their fees and

therefore in practice this proposal continues what already happens (ie fees are paid to the incumbent by wedding couples and funeral directors and then submitted to NDBF).

2. Parishes and clergy should decide whether the Vicar or the PCC will handle and distribute fees. Whoever does it, a single in-coming cheque has to be paid into an account and then payments have to be made to NDBF, PCC, organist, bell-ringers, flower arranger etc. There is such variety across the parishes that this is best handled locally. It is preferable that PCCs handle the fee income if this is possible. In any case, handling of fees should be subject to good practice and transparency.¹
3. Incumbents are to inform Funeral Directors each year (as they do at present) what the fees will be in their benefice or parish, and whether the cheque should be payable to the PCC or parish priest. Fees will include those set nationally, and any 'extras' (see paragraph 13) set by the parish. Parishes will also need to agree with Funeral Directors how, to whom and at what level expenses will be paid in addition to fees. In the lead up to 1st January 2013 parish priests will need to explain the changes to fees to Funeral Directors. The Archdeacons are available to support clergy in this task.
4. There is a form (based on the current form for those who assign fees) to send from the benefice or parish to the Diocesan Office at Church House with the fees due to the

¹ See *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy*, paragraph 10.5

NDBF, including a record of payments made for services taken by retired stipendiary clergy in connection with that parish.

5. Those eligible to receive fees for occasional offices continue to be retired stipendiary clergy. Readers and Non Stipendiary clergy (licensed and with PTO) will continue not to receive a fee. In exceptional circumstances and for an individual priest this might vary but only if this has been negotiated as part of their Statement of Particulars or Ministry Agreement, with the agreement of the Bishop and/or the Archdeacon. Please note that those who do not receive fees must claim for their full expenses.
6. The fee received for an occasional office comprises two parts, a fee designated for the NDBF and a fee for the PCC. This remains the case for both weddings and funerals but will now be the case for funerals conducted at the crematorium.
7. Funerals that take place at the crematorium are a particular pastoral and practical issue for incumbents. Retired stipendiary clergy who take a funeral service at a cemetery or crematorium will receive their fee from the parish to which the funeral relates. The incumbent or PCC will receive the fee from the Funeral Director and then remunerate the retired stipendiary priest as appropriate. We will follow the recommendation of the Archbishops' Council that 80% of the NDBF's fee is received by a retired stipendiary priest when they officiate at a wedding or a funeral. For example, because the fees have increased retired stipendiary clergy who currently receive

£67.32 (2/3rds of £102) will now receive £111.20 (80% of £139) for a funeral service at the Crematorium (2013 levels).

8. In the case of funerals at crematoria or cemeteries there are differences here to what currently happens in some places but the proposals serve to strengthen the relationship between retired clergy, parishes and incumbents. The proposals underline the responsibility of the parish priest for each funeral that happens in or from his or her parish. If a parish priest or a licenced assistant is not able to officiate at a funeral at the crematorium then the parish priest (or their deputy when on holiday) is responsible for identifying an appropriate Church of England minister to officiate on their behalf. The new system will place more responsibility on parish priests and retired clergy to work in partnership for the pastoral care of those for whom they carry out funerals. Due to the new legal ownership of the fee (NDBF and PCC), it will no longer be possible for retired stipendiary clergy to work independently and directly with Funeral Directors. The proposals will be for the benefit of our parishioners and for the wider church.

9. Parish priests will have discretion to waive fees in particular cases. The criteria for waiving a fee can only be given on exceptional grounds for financial hardship and not on (for example) longstanding attendance at church. If a fee is waived this is to be recorded on the fee submission form with a reason given (see paragraph 4). Waiving the PCC fee will require consultation with churchwardens and waiving the NDBF fee with the Archdeacons. If clergy do waive a fee they should be very

clear of the criteria that they have used and be able to account for this. It is advised that clergy contact their Archdeacon to discuss the criteria for waiving fees as cases arise.

10. If Funeral Directors request systems which involve direct BACS payment of the NDBF fee to the NDBF we will respond positively in liaison with the parishes concerned, but we do not anticipate handling local or PCC fees centrally, nor the disbursement of fees for retired clergy. If a BACS system is set up then full records of payments will need to be supplied by the Funeral Directors.
11. When retired stipendiary clergy receive their Permission to Officiate (or in some cases their NSM licence) it needs to include brief terms outlining the Bishops' expectations of those who have PTO concerning things like expenses, liaison with incumbents, and access to CMD and the Clergy Discipline Measure.
12. Retired stipendiary priests continue to be eligible to receive fees for casual duty for Sunday and midweek duty, but not at the parish church at which they regularly worship (see separate leaflet).
13. The intention of the new legislation is that there should be transparency about fees, and that there should be a standard fee for a particular service across the whole Church of England. This is important, for example, due to the internet where people can check fees and charges across a number of parishes. The (increased) statutory fee includes the use of the building, lighting and administration. 'Extras' can be charge provided a family

or a couple have a genuine option in terms of what is being provided; that is, if the extra amount is not paid then the 'extra' is not provided. A charge for heating may be made that bears a relationship to the actual cost of providing the heating. Parishes might consider a summer rate where heating is not provided (unless of course it is requested). In respect of vergers some PCCs might feel that the increased PCC fee might now cover this. Others might wish to offer a verger for a fee but would be required not to provide a verger if the fee is not paid (ie it is a genuine option). Parishes in which a verger as a matter of course receives a payment for attending and supporting an occasional office might wish to show a total fee for a funeral with the verger's fee shown as one of the extras.

14. The attention of clergy is drawn to the advice documents available on the Church of England website which give further information on more detailed questions.

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