

RETIRED CLERGY, WIDOWS' AND WIDOWERS – PASTORAL CARE GUIDELINES

Aim

To enable the Bishop to employ effective pastoral care for retired clergy, spouses, widows, widowers, and partners of deceased clergy living in the Diocese (referred to as retireds).

Preamble

These guidelines were produced in October 2005 after wide consultation to cater for an increasing number of retireds in the Diocese, and are annually revised.

The Bishop appointed the former Archdeacon of Manchester, Venerable Alan Wolstencroft, as **R**etired Clergy and Widow/ers **O**fficer (**RO**) to exercise, for the Bishop, overall care with the above aim as the brief.

The aim encompasses a desire on the part of the Bishop to keep in touch with all retireds at an appropriate level and ensure that they are valued and included in the Diocesan community.

It needs to be appreciated that any structure of ongoing care must be flexible enough to cater for a wide variety of opinions held by the retired clergy on the way, and level, that they wish to exercise their priestly vocation in retirement, and of the views held by the retireds of their need for continuing 'Episcopal' care.

1 First Principle

The pastoral care of all clergy rightly belongs to the Bishop who shares the care of souls with fellow bishops and clergy. The day to day pastoral responsibility of retireds rests primarily with either:

- (a) the clergy of the parish in which the retireds live,
- (b) the clergy of the parish in which they normally worship,
- (c) the Area Dean

All cases of sickness, bereavement, financial or other need, moments of celebration i.e. milestone birthdays or anniversaries, should, in the first instance, be referred to the RO who will, depending on the level of response needed or pastoral care required and agreed, notify the Bishop, Suffragan Bishop or Archdeacon and suggest appropriate action.

The RO, in conjunction with the Area Dean, appoints in each deanery a 'Visitor' who undertakes to keep in touch with retireds in the Deanery and ensures that the RO is informed of any changes of circumstances. The RO will ensure that relevant information is communicated at Diocesan level.

2 Pre- Retirement

At least ten years before retirement stipendiary clergy will be encouraged to assess and, if possible, plan and make provision for suitable housing for the future. Those carrying out ministerial reviews will sensitively include enquiries about retirement provision and may suggest that the priest contacts the RO for an initial conversation. Clergy should take advantage of free advice given by The Pensions Board, EIG or other similar organisations which offer various schemes for house purchase/equity loans etc. (See Clergy retirement housing booklet and information links.)

It is appreciated that few clergy give long term advanced notice of retirement, and some may wish to retain confidentiality until close to retirement, but the RO should be informed, in confidence, by Bishops court, at the earliest possible date of impending retirements

The Diocese will continue to buy into the Pre-Retirement Conferences arranged by Blackburn Diocese and the dates will be publicised by CME in the mailing. Those clergy within two or three years of retirement should be encouraged by CME officers and Bishop's Staff to attend. Costs for the course can be offset against CME grants. It is recommended, that spouses/partners should also be invited to attend, and their course costs will be met by the diocese.

Prior to retirement date (6-3 months) the RO will contact and if agreed visit the retiree and ensure that adequate provision has been made for the future in terms of pension, housing, scope for future ministry, continuing pastoral care, leaving arrangements etc.

3 Retirement

All clergy will, on retiring receive a personal letter of thanks from a Bishop and, where possible, will be invited to meet with a Bishop to take their leave.

It will be explained to those moving from the diocese that future continuing care and pastoral responsibility will be in the hands of the 'receiving' diocese, provided that the individual contacts the 'new' diocese and informs them of his/her residence. Data protection legislation restricts information being passed to the 'receiving' diocese for other than pension provision. Individuals will, if required, also have to apply for Permission to Officiate (PTO) in the 'receiving' diocese.

As a gesture of thanks retiring clergy who remain in the diocese will be offered life membership of the Retired Clergy Association.

On retirement or when PTO is granted, appropriate Diocesan guidance documents will be issued to clergy. The RO, on being notified about clergy who are retiring into the diocese, will send them a letter of welcome. The diocesan website contains lists of diocesan staff and contacts and a great deal of useful information re guidelines and procedures on various matters. The level of communication needs to be agreed but unless specifically rejected, all retired clergy will receive, by post or web site notification, such items as pastoral letters,

policy- synod statements, ember lists, prayer cycles, CME training opportunities etc.

The RO will contact retired clergy soon after their retirement to welcome them to the ranks and explain the various networks, contacts, available grants, synodical representation, CME training opportunities etc.

4 Continuing Service

If agreed with the retiree, the RO will inform the Deanery Visitor and the Area Dean, who in turn will notify the parish clergy (or in a vacancy the churchwarden) where the retired will be living so that a suitable local welcome is made and so that invitations to Parishes/Chapters/Deanery events can be extended.

Permission to Officiate, when requested and granted, is notified to the RO and the appropriate Area Dean. Great sensitivity is needed to respect the wishes of retired clergy regarding further ministry or involvement in church related activities.

Retired clergy, may wish to serve in a variety of ways, some more than others, and care needs to be taken about over-involvement of those keen to remain active, and understanding towards those who 'cannot let go'. The attitude and feeling of spouses/partners also needs to be taken into consideration by those wishing to use retired clergy.

Those not wishing to be involved should be protected from calls for duty, whilst those wishing to be involved should agree or otherwise with their Area Dean whether their name and phone number could be circulated to parishes.

It should be more visibly recognised that retired clergy are a rich resource for the diocese, deaneries, institutions and parishes and not just stop gaps for services. The wisdom, experience and expertise gained over the years may continue to be used in such areas as appraisal, mentoring and supporting younger clergy, spiritual direction, study groups and other forms of ministry. The Senior Staff and CME Officers will, from time to time, call upon and use retired clergy with the appropriate skills and expertise for particular and suitable purposes.

The Diocesan Board of Finance shall, each year, determine and make known to retired clergy and the parishes, the level of fees payable to them for occasional services and casual duties along with the recommended nationally agreed mileage rate for travel expenses, which should be paid on all occasions (see Payment of Parochial and Casual Duty Fees, available on the Diocesan website and the National Church website, or by hard copy on request to the Diocesan office).

Retired clergy will be encouraged to make use of their deanery synodical representation and the Diocesan Bishop may, if he feels it appropriate, give representation to the retired clergy on diocesan synod.

5 Continuing Vocation

All retired clergy, unless they have indicated otherwise, will be invited to the Annual Renewal of Vows during Holy Week in the Cathedral, and all retirees will be invited to Bishopscourt or a Suffragan Bishop's home for hospitality. This hospitality helps to reaffirm the value of past and present service given by retirees.

The Diocesan Retired Clergy Association will continue to provide other occasions for fellowship and for learning, and will encourage the ongoing spiritual development of retired clergy.

6. Hardships

It is recognised that from time to time, retirees encounter financial hardships and difficulties, especially when faced with unexpected and unbudgeted items. In such cases there are various charities, including a number of small Diocesan charities, able to make grant assistance. These are managed by the Diocesan Retired Clergy Widows and Widowers Committee, which meets twice yearly, consisting of the Bishop, who delegates responsibility as Chairman to the RO, the Archdeacons, the Bishop's Visitor (for separated clergy spouses), the Chairman of the Manchester Branch of the Retired Clergy Association, the Diocesan Secretary, and the Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

The group acts as trustees for the Miss I L Bothamley Bequest, Clergy Widows' and Dependents Fund, Thelma Turner Fund, & Bishop K. V. Ramsey Fund. They receive reports and requests for grant assistance, discuss any emergency grants made at the Chairman's and Secretary's discretion. (N.B Some charitable funds have restricted distribution). This group, with the Diocesan Registrar, fulfils the statutory functions of the various small trusts which are in the process of being consolidated by the Charities Commission.

The RO should be conversant with National and other 'clergy' charities that may be able to offer grants or assistance.

Pastoral care of retirees is evident in many places and grateful thanks are expressed to those who exercise an important ministry in caring for our 'retirees'. It is hoped that these guidelines will clarify and improve the efficiency of pastoral care and responsibility for retirees.

These guidelines were accepted and approved by the Bishop in liaison with his senior staff in October 2005, revised March 2010, July 2013 and November 2018.

Alan Wolstencroft
Bishop's Retired Clergy/Widows Officer
November 2018