

**PAYMENT OF PAROCHIAL FEES
TO SSMS, OLMs AND READERS**

**CODE OF PRACTICE
(Revised January 2016)**

The Diocese of Manchester is extremely well served by the ministries of SSMS, OLMs and Readers, who support the stipendiary ministry. The bishops and archdeacons are extremely grateful for all these ministries and wish to affirm all those who exercise them in their invaluable support. This Code of Practice sets out the basis of payments of fees and expenses to such ministers.

**A. PAROCHIAL FEES FOR OCCASIONAL OFFICES
Weddings and Funerals**

1. The Legal Position

(For full details see the current Diocesan Fees Guidance issued annually and available on the Diocesan website).

- 1.1. Since changes were implemented on 1 January 2013, all parochial fees for occasional offices conducted by any Church of England minister in any church, cemetery or crematorium chapel are payable to the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) and the Parochial Church Council (PCC), as set out in the current Table of Parochial Fees. The relevant portion payable to each is set out in the annual Fee Table published by the Church of England. There is no longer (except for very limited exceptions under transitional provisions for freehold incumbents) an 'incumbent's fee'.
- 1.2. It is for the DBF to decide whether any fee or part of the fee due to it may be paid to any minister who is not in receipt of a stipend. It is otherwise unlawful for a member of the clergy to retain any fee that is payable to the DBF.
- 1.3. No fee is payable for the funeral of child aged under the age of 16 years.
- 1.4. The incumbent or priest in charge of a parish has the right to waive the DBF fee without needing to refer the decision to bishop, archdeacon, or elsewhere, and to waive the PCC fee after consultation with the churchwardens, but the advice of the Archbishop's Council is that this power should only be exercised in particular cases of clear financial hardship.
- 1.5. Licensed clergy, stipendiary and self-supporting, will find reference to any entitlement to fees in their Statement of Particulars. Clergy with Permission to Officiate have no such statement, but the diocese may wish to introduce a 'Ministry Agreement' that will contain a similar reference.

2. Ministers not in Receipt of a Stipend (e.g. SSMs, OLMs, Readers)

- 2.1. By decision of the Diocesan Synod (in February 2013) ministers who are not in receipt of a stipend *and not in full-time employment* may claim from the DBF part of the DBF fee for any occasional office they have conducted. Again, this will be two-thirds of the DBF fee and is on condition that they have undertaken the associated pastoral visiting and preparation. They must use the appropriate claim form and under no circumstances must they receive any part of the fee locally.
- 2.2. In order to be able to receive such fees the minister must complete a registration form. The sample letter and registration form covering this are shown below (and available in the current Diocesan Fees Guidance)
- 2.3. Ministers who are not in receipt of a stipend but are in receipt of fees from the DBF are responsible for declaring these as income to HMRC for tax purposes.

3. Travelling and Other Expenses

- 3.1. Travelling expenses are non-statutory payments and not, therefore, included in statutory fees. The DBF is unable to be involved in collecting, reimbursing or administering these. The payment of expenses for travelling to or from funerals should be arranged and paid locally by agreement between the minister and the funeral director. It is recommended that a standard mileage rate is agreed in each deanery.
- 3.2. Where an SSM, OLM or Reader incurs loss of earnings in order to conduct a wedding or a funeral he/she may claim additional expenses from the PCC concerned, provided the PCC has agreed to the arrangements. Any such additional expenses should not exceed one half of the DBF fee for a funeral service (the 'Casual Duty Fee' below)

B. FEES FOR SUNDAY OR WEEKDAY SERVICES
Holy Communion, Morning or Evening Prayer, All-Age services etc.

The only ministers able to receive fees for Sunday or weekday services are RETIRED STIPENDIARY CLERGY with Permission to Officiate. The method by which these are paid depends on the circumstances.

Other ministers (e.g. SSMs, OLMs, Readers, retired non-stipendiary clergy) may receive travelling expenses but not fees for this type of service.

4. Travelling Expenses for other Ministers

- 4.1. All properly incurred expenses of stipendiary clergy, SSMs, OLMs, Readers and retired clergy should be reimbursed by the PCC (or DBF as in 3.2 above). This includes the expenses of clergy and Readers licensed to the parish and retired clergy who normally worship in the parish or benefice.
- 4.2. Where a PCC reimburses travelling expenses they should do so at the same rate as that agreed for reimbursement of their incumbent, priest in charge, or team vicar with responsibility, but **not less than** the DBF mileage rate.

CURRENT FEES
from 1 January 2016.

Casual Duty Fee (= 50% of DBF Church Funeral Fee)	£48.00
Maximum Payment for Casual Duty in any one day	£96.00
Fee payable to qualifying ministers (2/3 DBF Fee) for:	
Wedding Service	£126.00
Funeral Service	£64.00
Diocesan Mileage Rate	0.45p/mile

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

'Fees 2016: Diocesan Systems, Guidance, Fee Table and Specimen Return Forms' *Issued annually by the DBF)*

'A Guide to Church of England Parochial Fees'
Issued by Church House, Westminster, but included in the Diocesan document above

'Fees Table 2016'
Issued by Church House, Westminster, but included in the Diocesan document above

'Crematorium Funerals and Parochial Fees'
Issued January 2016 by the Legal Office of the National Church Institutions. Available on the Church of England Website.

'Church of England Parochial Fees from 1 January 2016 - Frequently Asked Questions'
Available on the Church of England Website

Church of England Website – Fees section
<https://www.churchofengland.org/weddings-baptisms-funerals/fees.aspx>

Revised January 2016

Date

Name

Department

Street

Town

County

Postcode

Dear ,

Re – Ministers not in Receipt of a Stipend and Occasional Office Fees

Bolton Deanery sent a motion to Diocesan Synod requesting that Self Supporting Ministers be allowed to receive portion of the DBF fee for weddings and funerals. Synod had a full debate on this issue and passed the following motion:

"With reducing numbers of stipendiary clergy and fresh patterns of shared ministry the Church relies heavily on Retired Clergy, NSMs, OLMs and Readers. The Church should be seen to promote good practice in ministry and a proper balance between the financial needs of the Church and the principle of the labourer being worthy of hire.

In the light of this, this Diocesan Synod believes that all ministers not in receipt of a full stipend or in full time employment should be entitled to receive two thirds of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) fee for weddings and funerals, undertaken at the request of the incumbent, provided they undertake the associated pastoral visiting and preparation. Fees should be reimbursed at the agreed rate and all claims should be via the DBF on an appropriate claim form and the DBF should develop policies and procedures to enable good practice."

We have now determined the procedures to allow this to happen; the central administration team at Church House will maintain an annual register of those self-supporting ministers who qualify, and who wish, to receive the fee income. We would ask therefore that you indicate on the attached form whether you qualify for receipt of the fees (as outlined in the motion above) and that you wish to do so. We would also ask that you supply bank account details so that payment can be made by BACCs transfer.

It has been determined that this should apply from the first of April of this year and we will therefore, backdate any payments to that date. A form for you to indicate any services you have conducted between April 1st and July 31st, is located on the rear of the registration form.

All ministers are reminded of the need to make an HMRC declaration where appropriate.

Monthly return forms from each parish have been amended so that the incumbent can indicate which services have been carried out which attract the fee income and by whom. Each month these will be reconciled with the register and payments made appropriately. Payment will be made within 14 days of receipt of the form.

Yours sincerely

SSM FEES Registration Form 201_

Please circle the appropriate answer:

I am a minister not in receipt of a full stipend or in full time employment

Yes No

I wish to claim 2/3 of the DBF portion of the fee for weddings and funerals

Yes No

Name

Signature

Date

Bank:

Sort code:

Account number:

Name of Account holder:

