



The Church of England  

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Diocese of Ely

# Guide to Living in a Parsonage House

Ely Diocesan Board of Finance

Revised May 2023

# Approved Diocesan Emergency Contractor Telephone Numbers

The Diocesan Office has a number of contractors who are approved to carry out emergency work at all of its properties.

In the event of an emergency occurring at your home, please try to contact the relevant number below.

## **Plumber or heating engineer**

Nigel Rogerson 07710 990397

## **Gas Leaks**

Transco 0800 111 999

## **Electrician**

Harnwell Electrical 01945 773207

## **General emergency work**

Richard Langridge 07912 843220

## **Blocked drains**

Mitchell & Mayle 01353 687984

## **Locksmiths**

Halls of Cambridge 01223 416000

## **Diocesan Property Department**

01353 652704

07956 252325 (OUT OF HOURS)

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# Welcome to the Diocese of Ely

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This booklet attempts to provide you with all the information you should need whilst living in Diocesan property. It contains the Houses Committee Policy Documents, emergency contact details and general information, all of which are regularly updated.

**Please take time to read through  
and keep it in a safe place for  
handy reference.**

The role of the Property Department is to provide an efficient service to all its occupants on a day to day basis. Although we try our best to make sure that the implementation of general repairs and maintenance work goes smoothly, if you do experience any problems or issues, please let us know. Equally, if you have any queries or questions, please feel free to contact us. We are here to help!

We hope you enjoy living in your home for many years to come.

## Property Department

Website: <http://www.elydiocese.org/ministry/clergy-housing>



Property Manager & Lettings  
Stella Green  
Email: [stella.green@elydiocese.org](mailto:stella.green@elydiocese.org)  
Telephone: 01353 652704  
Mobile. 07956 252325



Secretary to the Houses Sub-Committee and Assets  
Committee, Glebe & Investments Officer  
Jonathan Green  
Email: [jon.green@elydiocese.org](mailto:jon.green@elydiocese.org)  
Telephone: 01353 652726

In brief, the Property Department aim is to achieve the following

- To be continuously aware of the special relationship between the clergy and their housing.
- Maintain a core of independent contractors who are known and trusted by the clergy, their families and who are sensitive to their needs.
- Maintain clergy housing to the highest standards possible (within the constraints of budget restrictions).
- Ensure that the retained housing stock is responsive to the changing requirements of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
- Ensure that the Diocesan Property Department constantly and consistently monitors and improves the service it offers.
- Provide “best practice” and “value for money” in the evolution of the department.
- Form part of a team forwarding the mission and ministry of the Diocese.

The Department continues to work on

- ensuring full compliance with all current Houses Committee policies
- improving effective communication with clergy and contractors, thus ensuring knowledge and accessibility of policy
- ensuring that an approved complaints procedure is in place to deal with criticism of either the work of the Department or its contractors and to ensure that it is handled in a sensitive way
- to continuously monitor performance and expenditure in terms of value for money and adequacy
- to continue to consider and recommend to the Houses Committee improvements to policies and procedures
- to develop communication between the Bishop’s Senior Staff, other Diocesan departments and the Property Department
- to continue to evaluate the existing contractor pool
- to aid the Houses Sub-Committee’s decision-making process by providing accurate and relevant data
- to take away from the clergy the burden of property maintenance
- to seek ways of harmonising areas of policy between dioceses in order that incoming clergy are aware of what is “expected provision” by this Diocese and what are their own responsibilities (e.g. floor finishes, cookers, decorating, etc.).

# Preface from Bishop Stephen

For those coming to live and serve in the Diocese of Ely for the first time and for those whose homes have been parsonage houses for years, there is good news. We are unusually well served in the high standard of our housing stock and the support and responsiveness of the Houses Team.

Some of you will be experiencing life in a clergy house for the first time as you take up an appointment in the Diocese of Ely. Others, like me, will have lived in houses provided by the Church for many years. The Bishop's House is my eighth clergy dwelling. Whatever stage we find ourselves at, there is a distinctive set of issues that accompanies living in a house which we do not own yet inhabit as our home.

Living in a clergy house is quite different from being in rented accommodation, because it is part of the overall provision made for us along with stipend and pension. We do not receive a salary package, but a provision to sustain us and our families so that we can minister freely. This may very well mean that we inhabit houses we might not have chosen or imagined – in my case, moving from South London, through a variety of dwellings to find myself living in a medieval house next to a Cathedral.

We learn to accommodate ourselves to our accommodation! Wherever we are, however, we need to make the place our own, and I encourage you to take time to do this. It is also good to review the way we live in our houses from time to time, as family circumstances change, or even as we become better at nesting. This is as important for single clergy as for married clergy.

The more happily and confidently we inhabit our houses, the easier it is to live with the fact that for the clergy, they are both home and workplace. We are fortunate in that most of our vicarages offer study and welcome space which is separate from family and private space.

There are other ways of keeping sensible boundaries. It is best, for example, that the parish photocopier does not reside in the house of the parish priest unless this has been properly negotiated. Certainly, vicarages are not available to the parish as office space during vacancies and this should not be assumed when the house is occupied either.

There are other and better ways to express the role of the vicarage as not just a private space. Our houses are in most places symbols of our ministry,

of our place within the communities we serve. This is not quite so easy to express in multi-parish benefices, which makes it even more important that those among whom we do not live are able to see them from the inside occasionally.

I encourage you to be appropriately generous in using your houses as places of hospitality, and to rejoice in this opportunity to model the hospitality and generosity of God. What is modelled in the vicarage can become a pattern for a whole community.

So much of our response to God's provision for us can be summarised as stewardship. We are stewards of the houses we live in for the sake of the Church and those who come after us. That is why reporting necessary repairs and looking after the house and the garden well are so important.

I know that large gardens can be daunting and encourage you to seek help in the parish before matters get out of hand. Vicarage gardens are not expected to be maintained to competition standard or to become so complicated in their design that future inhabitants find them impossible to maintain.

The partnership between the Diocese and those of us who live in its houses exists to ensure that we are well housed in places where we can happily offer hospitality, relax with friends and family, meet with those who share the task of ministry with us, and give proper attention to those who bring us their joys and anxieties.

Our houses are expressions of ourselves. They should speak to those we invite into them of the hospitality of Christ, because we experience that hospitality personally from day to day. I urge you to live generously in your houses, and to use every opportunity to engage with the local community, offering welcome, kindness and a listening ear to all who are growing in faith and striving for a deeper relationship with God.

The Rt Revd Stephen Conway

## Introduction by The Chair of The Houses Sub-Committee

As Chair of the Houses Sub-Committee of the Diocese, I commend this booklet to you and encourage you to read the entire contents. In particular, please refer to the telephone numbers to be used in an emergency and as already encouraged, retain for easy reference.

This Guide has been prepared to help occupants of Diocesan houses and their families with the management of their home. It seeks to explain how the system of maintaining our houses works, and to set out clearly who is responsible for what, and when. By setting out the rights and duties of all involved, we seek to pre-empt difficulties.

Your house is both a home and a place of work, but it is for you to decide how to use it. However, it is not provided as a parish office, and you are under no obligation to follow previous practice.

Caring for the property is therefore not only important for the Diocese, but also for the priest and family as well. Attending to maintenance should aid mission both now and in the future.

Responsibility for maintaining the property is shared between the Diocese and the occupant. This Guide seeks to provide information for occupants about how these responsibilities are to be met. The Houses Sub-Committee hopes that gathering this information in one document will prove useful to all involved and enable us together to care for the property wisely yet prudently and hand it on in a good state for our successors.

You will appreciate that our funds are limited, and we will not always be able to accommodate your wishes. Funding, in the main, is derived from parish share across the Diocese and the Houses Sub-Committee has a responsibility to the parishioners to ensure that it is used prudently and that all occupants are treated equitably. Our Diocese believes that its stock of clergy houses is one of the best in the Church of England and we seek to build a real partnership with you so that concerns about housing will not deflect you from your ministry in the Church.

The Houses Sub-Committee does not differentiate between the status of the occupants and this guide applies to all Parsonages and Diocesan Board of Finance houses. We are always looking to improve the services that we provide and welcome any suggestions for how we can do this. We also welcome feedback on the clarity and helpfulness of this booklet. Working together, we can make it work well!



The Reverend Canon Becky Dyball  
Email: [becky.dyball@elydiocese.org](mailto:becky.dyball@elydiocese.org)



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# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) Revised March 2023

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## **Introduction:**

This section is divided into five main areas:-

- Internal Housing
- External Housing
- Moving into your Home
- Moving out of your Home
- General Information

## **Buildings Insurance**

The Houses Sub-Committee has a block policy insuring the structure of all Diocesan clergy houses.

This policy is for domestic purposes only and does not cover any business activities that may be undertaken at the house by yourself or your spouse.

## **Contents Insurance**

Please note; none of the policies entered into by the Houses Sub-Committee covers contents of parsonage houses. It is your responsibility to insure all your personal possessions and appliances.

**Please remember, you have a duty of care to all visitors who enter your property and it is essential you take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety at all times.**

## **Internal Housing**

### **Internal Decorating (See also "Moving into your Home")**

Q. What decorating can I do?

A. The house is your home and like any home you can carry out any

internal decorating you wish.

We would remind you that the house will also be occupied by your successors in office. Using wallpaper or very strong coloured paints will make redecoration more difficult and expensive for clergy coming to the house after you. We recommend that any decorating you carry out accommodates a scheme using solely pastel colours. We would be grateful if you kept all the ceilings in a white matt finish and any gloss work in your house to brilliant white paint.

You are not permitted to apply any textured paint finishes to ceilings and walls. We will not sanction painting your kitchen units or utility room units. Clergy will be expected to carry out any further decorating required. To assist in this, the Houses Sub-Committee may make a discretionary grant of up to £100 towards materials. It is hoped that when re-decoration takes place, you take into consideration the future re-decoration of the house. To apply for the grant, please send a letter and accompanying relevant receipt to the Property Manager. You must confirm that the house has been decorated in accordance with Diocesan policy.

### **Floor Finishes (See also "Moving into your home")**

Q. What type of floor finishes will I need to provide myself?

A. The Houses Committee is unable to provide floor finishes to rooms other than "wet areas" (kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, etc.), the study, hall, staircase and landing. See also the section "**Moving into Your Home**".

We would request that you do not lay materials (other than carpet) without first discussing the matter with the Property Manager.

Should clergy require help in choosing suitable carpets, the recommended Diocesan suppliers have a wide range of carpets to select from. Please call the office if you require contact information.

### **Pets**

Q. What Pets am I Permitted to Keep?

A. The Houses Committee requests that a maximum of two cats and two dogs are permitted to be kept in your house at any one time.

The Houses Committee requests that any pets, other than domestic cats and dogs, are kept outside at all times. Prior agreement of the Houses Committee is required if it is your intention to keep animals other than the

permitted cats and dogs.

It is becoming more common that when the Houses Committee purchases new property, in some instances, they are required to enter into covenants which specifically prevent the keeping of some animals as pets at the property, eg; chickens, ducks, etc., or on occasion, a restriction on the number of cats and dogs that can be kept.

It is necessary to obtain permission from DEFRA before keeping certain animals at a domestic residence, eg; pigs, sheep, goats. Where appropriate, you will need to provide suitable consent from the requisite authority. Before you purchase or introduce any such animals to the house, please confirm with the Property Department whether any such restrictions/covenants exist at your home.

On vacation of the property, you will be responsible for removing associated structures used for retaining pets and making good any damage to the garden.

Please be aware that pet foodstuffs and bedding attracts rats, pests and other vermin. Damage caused to Diocesan property as a result of vermin infestation will not be funded from the Houses budget.

Please remember, any damage caused to your house or garden will be paid for by you. (Any work must be carried out by a contractor approved by the Diocesan Office.)

## **Cat and Dog Flaps**

Q. Am I able to have a cat or dog flap fixed through one of the external doors?

A. Where permitted, cat and dog flaps may be fitted through external doors only. It is the responsibility of the clergy to pay for both the cost of the cat/dog flap, and the cost of installing such a flap within the external door.

We will also require that you pay for the cost of the future reinstatement of the door panel/door structure in advance of the work being carried out. Any work must be carried out by a contractor approved by the Diocesan Office.

As with any other structural alteration to the house, no cat/dog flap can be installed without the written prior consent of the Property Manager.

## **Kitchen Appliances**

Q. Are any kitchen appliances provided in diocesan houses?

A. The Diocese does not provide or maintain any kitchen equipment (“White Goods” or cookers) within its houses.

Where a property has built in kitchen equipment, the following policy has been adopted:

- i. Unless otherwise agreed, when the Diocese purchases a house (and prior to your occupation), work will be carried out to remove and make good kitchens which accommodate built-in “white” goods.
- ii. The cost of repair to existing built-in “white” goods and cookers rests with you. If you are not willing to accept the cost of such a repair, then the Houses Committee will carry out necessary alterations to the kitchen layout to accommodate your own appliances, thus securing an equitable future kitchen layout. The Houses Committee will pay for the removal of the existing white goods and cookers.

## **Home Improvements:**

Q. Am I able to request any improvements to my home?

A. The Property Department holds on its database a facility for recording requests made by clergy.

The database holds information about work which, through budgetary constraints, or through prioritisation, we are unable to implement immediately.

If such a request is made, you will receive a letter identifying the scope of the work, the priority it has received, together with a reference number which can be used when contacting the office at a future date.

The items still remaining on the database at the end of a financial year are given a priority, are cost evaluated and incorporated into future budgets as considered appropriate.

Q. Am I able to remove or alter any fixtures and fittings in my home?

A. All fixtures and fittings included in your home are part of the fabric of the parsonage. If you would like to alter or replace any these items, please write or e-mail the Property Manager before attempting any alterations.

Please note that you will be responsible for the annual servicing,

maintenance and eventual replacement of built-in “white goods”.

Please also refer to Kitchen Appliances and Boilers and Heating Systems.

## **Electrical Wiring and Equipment**

Q. What is the policy regarding electrical equipment and wiring within a parsonage house?

A. All electrically operated equipment owned by yourself is your responsibility.

Its general safety and adequacy should be checked on a regular basis. It is important to note that faulty appliances can seriously affect residual current devices (the small switches in the consumer unit –these devices have replaced traditional wired fuses), the result of which will mean that your electricity supply will be cut.

Your home's electrical circuits are tested to NICEIC standards either at the time of a quinquennial inspection, or that of in-going works. Where general electrical routine problems are encountered suggesting further investigation, an additional test is carried out at that time.

**The recommendations and standards of the IEE have been adopted. It is essential to remember that under no circumstances should the electrical wiring or its associated equipment (switches, power sockets, ceiling roses etc.), be altered or tampered with by yourself, members of your family, or any unauthorised person.**

**Under new legislation such work would be illegal. It is important to remember that the above requirements include electrical equipment in gardens.**

## **Computers**

Recent experience has shown that where more than one computer is operated within a household and all computers are attached to surge protectors, there exists a possibility that your power supply can be cut as a result of the residual current devices being tripped.

It is recommended therefore, prior to calling the office about lack of electrical power, that you first of all unplug computers and check that the relevant RCD switch is enabled.

In 2011/12, the Electrical Safety Council reported that 2.5 million people

suffered electrical shocks, of which 350,000 suffered serious injuries. There were 37,601 domestic fires, 5,956 injuries and 244 deaths, all as a result of electrical faults, misuse or articles left too close to appliances.

## **Security Alarm Systems**

Q. Does the Houses Committee provide security alarm systems?

A. With the exception of recently built parsonage houses, we do not provide security alarm systems within our properties.

However, where in the opinion of the appropriate Archdeacon and the Property Manager, the house is regarded as being sited within an area subject to higher levels of crime, or is considered vulnerable, security alarm systems can be considered for installation, subject to the approval of the Houses Sub-Committee.

If your house has been provided with a security alarm system it is important to remember that the responsibility and payment for its servicing, repair and maintenance rests either with yourself or your parish. It is recommended that the system is serviced every 12 months.

## **Telephones**

Q. Who pays for my telephone?

A. We ensure that a main telephone line services the house. However, the cost of rental for a telephone line and equipment rests with yourself or your parish.

If you feel that you require additional telephone sockets within your house (over and above those already installed), the cost of supply of the additional wiring and equipment must be met by yourself. However, prior to any authorisation, it is necessary to agree any work with the Property Manager.

Recent changes in the regulations relating to competitive practices in the telephone industry now mean that BT is unable to retain telephone numbers on residential accounts during vacancies.

## **Utility Bills**

Q. Who pays for my Council Tax & Water Rates?

A. The Houses Committee budget meets the annual council tax and water charges at your house. The combined annual cost is circa £540,000.

## **Boilers and Heating Systems**

Q. Who pays for servicing my boiler?

A. The Houses Sub-Committee enters into contracts with heating engineers who carry out the servicing of your boiler on an annual basis. When your boiler is due for a service, you will receive a telephone call from the contractor, who will arrange a convenient appointment with you.

At the time of the inspection, you will be issued with a "Landlord/ Homeowner Gas/Oil Safety Record", which you should retain, and a copy is sent to the Diocesan Office by the contractor.

At the time of the service, please mention to the contractor any additional minor plumbing work that can be carried-out at the time of the boiler servicing (e.g. minor radiator problems, such as thermostatic controls, the boiler programmer, tap washers, etc.)

The Houses Sub-Committee does not service your gas cooker or provide gas safety certificates relating to any of your own gas appliances.

Q. What happens if I run out of Heating Oil?

A. Please ensure that you keep a regular check on the level of oil in your storage tank. **It is advisable not to let the level drop below quarter of the tank's capacity.** Many heating oil providers will now offer you a service, whereby they will check the level of oil in your tank and "top it up" if necessary.

If you feel that the sight gauge is giving an inaccurate reading, please contact the Property Department as soon as possible. The Houses Sub-Committee cannot accept responsibility for damage to heating systems as a result of clergy running out of heating oil. Under these circumstances the Diocesan Office will invoice you for the full cost of the contractor's work.

It is advisable that your oil tank is provided with a secure, high tensile steel padlock to help avoid oil theft.

## **Chimney Sweeping**

Q. Who pays for sweeping my chimneys?

A. The cost of sweeping a flue is the responsibility of clergy. It is important to regularly sweep flues in order to ensure that there are no blockages (e.g. from bird's nests, etc.) following the spring/summer period. Further, you should use competent contractors.

## **Wall Tiles**

Q. Am I allowed to change wall tiles, or to paint them with a proprietary paint?

A. No. Please contact the Property Manager if there is an issue with your wall tiles.

## **Curtains and Blinds**

Q. Who provides curtains and blinds in my home?

A. All curtains and blinds are your own responsibility. Existing blinds will not be replaced from the Houses Committee budget. We do not provide replacement specialist blinds to roof lights.

## **Roof Void**

Q. What can I store within the roof?

A. We try to discourage storage within the roof void for two significant reasons. Firstly, roofs are designed to receive light loads, mainly for access or properly designed water tank platforms. This is particularly significant where the house is a more modern structure where prefabricated roof trusses have been used.

If heavy goods are stored (or lighter ones in high piles), then significant damage to ceilings (and even the roof structure itself) can occur.

Secondly, with modern levels of roof insulation (up to 320mm) it is necessary to maintain the same thickness of insulant over the whole of the roof void. By allowing storage over the insulant, you are significantly decreasing its effectiveness resulting in your heating bills maybe higher than necessary.

## **Glazing to Windows & Doors**

Q. Who is responsible for accidental damage to glass in windows and doors?

A. Damage to windows and doors is covered under the Board's block buildings insurance policy. Occupiers will be responsible for meeting the excess on the policy, which is currently £250.

However, you will not be expected to pay for broken seals on double glazed units or structural related damage.



# External House

## Electric Vehicle Chargers

Q. What is the Houses Committee's Policy for the Installation of EV Chargers?

A. The Diocese will permit the installation of an electric vehicle charging point at your home, but please be aware the following steps must be undertaken:-

1. If you are purchasing a brand new car, the suppliers will offer to install a charging point as part of your purchase. Prior to the installation taking place they will survey the electrical installation at your home. Before the installation can go ahead, the following will need to be confirmed;

- i. The overall supply to the property is not less than 100 amps
- ii. The electrical distribution board must have sufficient free capacity to accept an additional circuit.
- iii. The installation point should be no further than 10m from the distribution board.

If your property fails the survey for point i. above, please contact the Property Manager and she will assist you in resolving the issue. UK Power Networks offer an upgrade service free of charge increase the supply to the property. Any work of this nature requires disconnection of the electric meter and this work can only be undertaken by UKPN authorised contractors. Any disturbance of the connection to the main meter is illegal and could lead to prosecution.

If your property fails the survey for point ii. above, please contact the Property Manager and she will arrange for a Diocesan retained contractor to upgrade the distribution board.

2. If you are purchasing a second hand vehicle, you may not be offered the opportunity of a free or subsidized EV charge point. At the current time, the Houses Committee is not in a position to be able to pay for the charger unit. If you wish to purchase an EV charger, before doing so, please contact the Property Manager to arrange for an electrical survey to be carried out by the Diocesan retained electricians.

Before purchasing your vehicle, please contact the Property Manager so an electrical survey can be carried out in advance to ensure the supply is ready to receive the charger.

We are aware that some older vehicles may be capable of receiving a charge via a normal domestic electrical extension lead. For sake of

security and potential fire risk, the Houses Committee does not advise that you attempt to charge a car from a socket in your house or garage.

## **Photo Voltaic Panels**

Q. What is the Houses Committee's Policy for installing PV Panels?

A. The Committee now installs panels at new properties under construction (as part of its compliance requirements with current building regulations). The Houses Committee support the aim to reduce the carbon output of our properties and recognises that the installation of PV panels at some of our houses will help do that. The housing stock is being reviewed to identify where the installations will potentially be most beneficial; and of those houses which are not constrained by potential planning restrictions. A policy for the secondary installation of PV panels on existing Diocesan houses is in process. The Houses Committee has been proactive in trialing the installation of PV cells and battery storage units at a major refurbishment. Potential installation costs are high, the central church authorities have recently announced that targeted funding for carbon reduction schemes will be made available in the coming 10 years and it is envisaged that at least part of the costs will be covered by some of that funding.

## **TV Aerials**

Q. Does the Diocese provide TV aerials?

A. The Houses Sub-Committee installs and maintains the main terrestrial television aerial and existing aerial sockets within a house. We do not supply additional television points. Where an existing aerial needs replacing, we will be able to upgrade the aerial to a digital unit. We are unable to upgrade aerials where the existing unit is in working order.

If it is your intention to install additional television sockets within your home, it will be necessary for you to obtain the prior consent of the Property Manager.

All work will be carried out at your own expense by approved contractors.

Many families enjoy watching programmes delivered by satellite and cable television stations. The erection of a satellite dish is an essential part of the installation and we would ask that the dish is placed in an

unobtrusive position that will not cause structural defects or encourage the ingress of surface water.

It should be remembered that satellite dishes often require planning permission prior to installation, particularly in Conservation Areas and where your home is a listed building.

Where a cable company's installation is agreed, it is essential that you ensure that the cable company makes good any disturbance to a driveway, garden and wall areas.

Any way-leaves will need to be agreed by the Property Manager and will be at the cost of the occupier and any documentation will be required to contain sketch drawings identifying the line of way-leaves and the position of aerials.

These documents need to be held at the Diocesan Office.

## **Security Lights**

Q. Who replaces bulbs in external security lights?

A. Where external security lights exist in parsonage houses, clergy are responsible for changing the light bulbs.

It is important to replace a bulb with an identical unit to that which exists. If damage to the light fitting occurs as a result of an inappropriate bulb, the Diocesan Office will be unable to refund cost of a new fitting. If help is required in identifying the type of bulb needed, please contact the Diocesan office.

When changing bulbs it is important to use strong ladders positioned in accordance with good working practice available from [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).

The work should be carried out in conjunction with another person giving support and stability to the bottom rungs of the ladder.

Should you feel either unable to carry out the work yourself or unable to obtain suitable assistance, please contact the Property Department.

## **Drains/Blocked Drains**

Q. My drains are blocked.

A. Over the past few years we have experienced blocked drains caused by materials other than toilet paper being flushed through the wc - e.g. baby wipes, nappies, sanitary items. Such blockages can be severe and cause significant disruptions to households whilst the problem is being remedied. Therefore, in your own interest, please ensure that only proprietary toilet

tissue is used.

If the Diocesan Office is requested to clear a blocked drain, then please be aware that the cost of any such work will be borne by the occupant, should the problem be on which has been caused by “misuse”.

## **Cesspools/Septic Tanks**

Q. Who pays for emptying our cesspool/septic tank?

A. The cost of emptying cesspools rests with the Houses Sub-Committee. When you think that a cesspool or septic tank is becoming full, please contact the Property Department, who will arrange and pay the cost of an appropriate contractor to empty the unit as soon as possible.

It is generally recommended that a septic tank/cesspool is emptied once every 12 months, although some units are capable of working well after that period. Where possible and practical, please avoid placing excessive quantities of bleach and biological detergents down the drains.

## **Gardens**

### **Maintaining Your Garden**

It is your responsibility to maintain and control your garden. You can do this by undertaking the work yourself or paying someone to help you (please note this is a legitimate expense and can be claimed against tax).

Should you find yourself unable to deal with it on a routine basis, your Parish may be willing to give practical help or pay towards the cost of employing a gardener. If this is not possible, please contact the Property Department before it becomes overgrown and too much of a burden.

**The sooner you speak to us, the sooner we can discuss any problems and lessen the expense to yourself and the Diocese as a result.** If you have a large area of grass or are having difficulty financing the cost of essential gardening equipment (including mowers), it may be possible to apply for grant funding.

The Diocese has registered with Idox, which gives details of charities with funds available for a variety of purposes. Please refer to the following for more information: <http://www.idoxopen4community.co.uk>.

### **Garden Sheds**

Q. Am I provided with a garden shed?

A. We will not provide new sheds unless it is considered that there is a lack

of adequate storage space within the house and its environs.

We will not repair “old” sheds, unless the existing shed structure poses a health and safety danger or the house storage facilities are considered inadequate. However, we will remove them from the parsonage grounds if desired.

### **Garden Compost**

Q. Am I allowed to construct a compost heap within the garden?

A. Compost heaps are considered a necessary part of everyday gardening and are often essential for the collection of general garden debris.

However, we would ask that you ensure that the compost is well controlled, kept free from vermin and at the end of your occupancy is removed in total and the compost site made good.

### **Fences**

Q. Do you provide garden fences to control and retain family pets?

A. The only garden fencing which we provide is perimeter garden fences and those which isolate the house from the rear garden area. We do not provide fencing to control or retain pets, nor will we be able to amend existing fencing for those purposes.

### **Garden Planting**

The Houses Sub-Committee requests that you do not plant any new trees in your garden or any large shrubs close to the house or its out-buildings to minimum the effects from roots to foundations and masonry.

We are also anxious that new trees planted in a parsonage garden do not become protected by local authority Tree Preservation Orders. Further, we are concerned about the rising costs of tree maintenance affecting the Houses Committee budget. All self-sown or newly planted trees will be removed from the garden prior to you moving into your home.

Please also ensure that ivy and other creeping plants, such as Wisteria, etc., are removed from the masonry.

### **Parsonage Trees**

Q. Who is responsible for maintaining trees growing within my parsonage boundaries?

A. Fruit trees, shrubs and “dwarf” varieties of deciduous/evergreen

trees are the responsibility of yourself. Please ensure that growth to those plants under your control is regularly controlled and that foliage does not affect the house masonry, nor impair the free flow of air around the house or out-buildings. You have a duty of care to all visitors who enter your property and it is essential you take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety in maintaining trees and large shrubs.

Please remember that many parsonage houses are within Conservation Areas and may also have Tree Preservation Orders attached to them. Where this is the case, Local Authority consent will be required, prior to carrying out work (except in the case of an emergency). Please help us by reporting problems with trees to the Diocesan Office as soon as possible.

All other trees are the responsibility of the Diocesan Office. A tree safety assessment programme is currently being carried out at all Diocesan property. Any work identified from the inspection will be carried out by our retained tree surgeon.

## Moving Into Your Home

Every effort will be made to ensure that your move is as straightforward as possible. You will have an opportunity to meet the Property Manager at your new home so that she can explain the work which will be carried out at the house, prior to your move. At that time you will be able to discuss your own ideas. However, that will not necessarily mean that those ideas will be incorporated into an in-going works schedule.

Following completion of any in-going works to your new home, the Property Manager will produce a quinquennial inspection report on the property. The Houses Sub-Committee has agreed that you will be asked to review the document and, if in agreement, sign it as a true record of the condition and layout of your home.

The document will be reviewed again at the time of your departure and you are expected to return the house in a similar condition to that identified in the survey report, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding

Q. What decorating will be carried out for me?

A. As part of new occupancy works, if deemed necessary (and subject to an agreement between the Archdeacon and the Property Manager), the

following rooms will be fully decorated:

1. Hall, staircase and landing,
2. Study,
3. Kitchen.

We are only able to decorate using a maximum of 4 neutral colours, (including white) in a matt finish. The Houses Sub-Committee will not hang wallpaper in any rooms.

Clergy will be expected to carry out any further decorating required. It is hoped that when re-decoration takes place, you take into consideration the future re-decoration of the house.

Should you wish to wallpaper any of your rooms, you will be required to remove the wallpaper upon your departure, make good plaster surfaces and apply neutral emulsion paint to all walls.

Q. Which floor coverings will be provided for me?

A. The hall, staircase, landing and study will be carpeted with a suitable material which is considered reasonably easy to clean and of a neutral colour. It has been decided that the most appropriate floor finish for wet areas (kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, bathroom, w/c etc.) will be a vinyl cushion floor.

Existing floor finishes will only be replaced if considered by the Property Manager to be in an unacceptable condition.

Where houses have a separate entrance lobby, a suitably hard wearing and washable surface will be provided.

We request that you do not replace floor finishes provided by the Houses Committee without the prior consent of the Property Manager. However, where such floor finishes are excessively worn, we will endeavor to replace them at our cost.

# Moving Out of Your Home

Q. What am I expected to do upon leaving my home?

A. Prior to leaving your home, you will be contacted by the Archdeacon who will arrange to meet with you and discuss your views about the suitability (or otherwise) of the parsonage. It would be most helpful if you were able to inform the Archdeacon of your impressions (both good and bad) of the house.

- Would you please inform the Property Department of the names of your utility service providers, together with your customer reference numbers.
- You will need to carefully note your utility meter readings and inform the respective companies of your intended leaving date and, of course, to ensure full payment of outstanding costs.
- For gas, it is best practice to turn off the mains supply at the tap adjacent to the meter. However, you will need to extinguish your boiler and any other pilot lights first.
- For heating oil, it would be most helpful if you were able to retain sufficient heating oil in the tank for the boiler to be re-fired and the heating system to be tested after you have left. To leave the tank with little oil in-situ can lead to costly repairs to the boiler fuel pump and burner.
- During winter months, however, the central heating should be left on a minimum setting. Please inform the Diocesan Office if this has been done.
- For electricity, you merely inform the service provider.
- Please remove all your possessions from the house, roof voids, garage and any out-buildings.
- Before or on the day of departure, you should make sure that the property and all its contents are properly cleaned, including carpets, etc.
- Please arrange to have your post redirected by the post office.
- During any vacancy, the maintenance of the parsonage gardens is the responsibility of the churchwardens and PCC.
- Frequently, members of the church volunteer to keep the gardens tidy. However, if voluntary labour is not available and the PCC is not able to meet any costs incurred, then the Property Manager must be informed.
- Please ensure that your PCC is informed of their responsibilities prior to your departure. Also, see the FAQ for Gardens and Garden Compost, Q.



- Am I allowed to construct a compost heap within the garden?
- As we are unable to retain telephone numbers with British Telecom (FAQ 1.h also) you may wish to invite your PCC to retain the account themselves with an answer phone so that messages can be picked up.
  - Finally, please return one set of keys to the Diocesan Office. It would be helpful if one of your churchwardens retained a further set in case of an emergency.
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## General Information

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### **Achieving Carbon Net Zero of Clergy Houses**

Following the passing of resolutions at both General Synod and Diocesan Synod, the Diocese of Ely is committed to ensuring that the operation of major sections of Diocesan business are at “Net Zero” Carbon Emissions by 2030. The operation of the housing stock is one of those functions. The Houses Committee is actively reviewing the current housing stock to identify ways to reduce the generation of carbon in the operation of the home. The transition from Oil and Gas fired heating and the installation where appropriate of PV cells forms part of this strategy.

### **Reimbursements**

In order to control Houses Committee budgets, aside from emergency callouts where you have been unable to contact a diocesan emergency contractor, it is essential that no work is carried out at your home without the prior authorisation of the Diocesan Office. You will be issued with updated emergency contractor contact details on a regular basis. Telephone numbers can be found on purchase orders and on the Ely Diocesan website.

### **Running a Business**

The permission of the Houses Sub-Committee is required before any business activity can be carried out from a clergy house.

In considering any approach, the Houses Committee will require written confirmation that;

- You have arranged appropriate insurance. (Please note that you

risk being financially exposed as a result of any event leading to a claim against the property insurance being rejected by an insurance company.)

- The proposal does not constitute a change of use of any part of the property (as defined in the Planning Act of 2008 and other associated legislation).
- Any alterations required by regulatory authorities have the prior consent of the Property Manager.

## **Lodgers & Guests**

From time to time you may wish to share your home with a lodger. It must be emphasized that you ensure the presence of lodgers does not have a negative impact on the cleanliness or condition of the property.

The taking in of lodgers in any home gives rise to issues in the following areas, which must be resolved before any action is taken.

### **General**

Be certain that the arrangements you propose do not create a tenancy. Consider whether your use of the house would warrant any lodger having to undertake a DBS check.

Be aware that occupation of a room in your house may affect the basis on which Council Tax is charged for your home. See also Utility Bills Q. Who pays for my Council Tax & Water Rates?

### **Data Security**

Consideration should be given to the security and storage of data in your study. Is the storage secure? Does a tenant impact on your or the PCC's data protection policy?

Consideration should be given to the security and storage of data held in your study.

### **Licensing**

Having lodgers in your home may mean that it is necessary to have it licensed as a house in multiple occupation as it may lead to the property being occupied by three or more households. It is your responsibility to confirm any requirements with your local authority. The local authority is responsible for licensing arrangements under The Housing Act 2004 (The

Act). Please be guided by advice from your local authority.

Before proceeding you must obtain any necessary license. (Please note failure to obtain a license may result in you being prosecuted. Penalties include a maximum fine of £20,000.).

A copy of the documentation must be sent to the Property Department.

## **Health & Safety**

Notwithstanding any specific requirements a local authority may seek to impose on you, you are strongly advised to.

- If there is a gas supply to your home you must obtain, on an annual basis, a gas safety certificate in respect of any gas appliances at your home.
- Please note that certification issued by engineers on behalf of the Diocesan Board of Finance only covers gas boilers and gas fires previously installed.
- To PAT test any electrical equipment that will be used by a lodger (bedside lamp, cookers, fridges, etc.) on an annual basis.
- Take professional advice relating to fire safety in respect of;
  - Fire Risk Assessments
  - The provision and installation of necessary fire equipment.

The Property Department must be forwarded a copy of the above documentation and approve any recommended work prior to commencement. You will be required to meet the cost of any works undertaken.

## **Insurance**

Taking a lodger will most certainly alter the basis of your contents insurance.

You are recommended to:

- a) Inform your insurer of the change in circumstance.
  - b) Require any lodger to insure their own possessions independently of your own insurance.
  - c) You should inform the Diocesan Office so your change in circumstance is registered with the Houses Committee's insurers.
- Please note you will be required to meet any additional premiums

charged as a result.

## **Taxation**

The Government and Inland Revenue run a number of schemes **which cover income arising from having lodgers in your home.**

You are advised to take independent advice on the treatment for tax purposes of any income you may receive from lodgers.

## **Leaving a House**

When you leave a house, you will be required to hand it back with vacant possession and in a condition you would yourself wish to accept it in. It is essential that any agreements in place have been terminated and any lodgers have vacated and returned all keys to the property one month prior to your departure.

# Cold Weather Procedures for Your Home

## General Advice on Protecting Your House During Extreme Cold Weather Conditions.

- It is essential that every precaution be taken to avoid frost damage and burst pipes during cold weather. If in doubt, please contact the Property Department for further advice.
- Should you be going away at any time during a period of cold weather, please take all necessary measures to ensure that there is sufficient background heat in your house to prevent either hot and cold pipes or the boiler freezing up. It would be also helpful if someone was asked to keep a watchful eye on the house.
- Where radiators are fitted with thermostatic radiator valves, it would be sensible to turn these down to the frost stat setting after which they will only come on when the room temperature reaches around 4 or 5 degrees centigrade. The boiler can operate normally and its internal thermostat will allow it to cut off when the water temperature has reached the pre- set limit, thus saving expenditure on unnecessary heating. With relatively low temperatures in the house, should your roof accommodate any water supply tanks, it would be sensible to leave the roof void access door open.
- Whilst you are away, it is also sensible to ensure that the stopcock is turned off to limit any damage in the unfortunate event of a serious leak.
- Where a house is heated by oil, it would be prudent to check oil tank fuel levels beforehand to ensure a sufficient supply of heating oil. Please remember that should the heating oil run out, the cost of enabling the system will not be met from the Houses Sub-Committee budget.
- Where your boiler is a condensing boiler, the condensate pipe can easily freeze up in extremely cold weather. This pipe is normally located on the outside of the wall close to where the boiler flue can be seen. You will need to check this pipe is not frozen before you contact this office. If found to be frozen, it can normally be defrosted by pouring hot water over the bend of the pipe.
- Do not underestimate the onset of a severe cold spell. It must be stressed that if repair costs arise from negligence by not taking reasonable precautions, then the Houses Sub-Committee will not be expected to pay for reinstatement and repairs – nor possibly will its insurers.
- Should you need the services of our heating engineer, please see contact details at the front of this handbook.

## **Condensation Prevention Advice**

- Condensation occurs on cold surfaces such as windows, floors and walls. Unseen, it can also occur within the fabric of the structure. It can damage the décor, floor coverings, clothes and bedding and can cause mould on walls and ceilings, as well as being a catalyst for rot.
- New buildings often take a long time before they are fully dried out and may need extra heat and ventilation in the interim period.
- Intermittent heating causes condensation to gather when the air and surfaces cool.
- Extractor fans, where fitted, should be used whenever water vapour is being produced, e.g. cooking, washing clothes and bathing. Doors and windows should be kept closed when using the fan and it should be left running until any mist clears from the windows.
- Tumble dryers (other than condensing types) for laundry should have the moist air ducted to the outside.

### **To Minimise Condensation**

- Keep all rooms warm and ventilated with an even temperature throughout
- Keep kitchen doors closed when cooking, washing or drying clothes.
- Open the window or use the extractor fan, where fitted
- Keep the bathroom door closed when bathing and open the window or use the extractor fan, where fitted
- Avoid the use of paraffin heaters and flueless gas heaters in unventilated rooms (note that paraffin produces a volume of water equal to the amount of fuel used)
- If possible, keep some heating on at all times during cold weather

### **If Condensation Occurs**

- Heat the room
- Mop up as much as possible
- Open the window a little
- Keep doors shut
- Contact the Diocesan Office should you experience continuous excessive condensation.

Remember: Warmth and Ventilation Help Prevent Condensation

# Gas Safety Regulations

Under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998, where gas is supplied to a property, all gas appliances in that property must be inspected at least once in every 12 months.

The gas appliances at the property will have already been inspected within the previous 12 months and the Gas Safety Inspection Record will either be at the property or given to you at the start of your occupation.

When the annual inspection becomes due during the term of your occupation, we will arrange for a Gas Safe registered engineer to attend the property and carry out the safety inspection under these regulations.

The Regulations were brought in to protect you from carbon monoxide poisoning and it is imperative that you allow access to the engineer to carry out this very important safety check.

The Property Department will need to arrange to remedy any defect, fault or repair found to be necessary following the safety check.

Should you suspect a gas leak at any time, ring Transco immediately on 0800 111999 - Do Not Wait

Should you suspect a carbon monoxide leak at any time, ring Transco immediately and seek medical advice straight away - Do Not Wait

Inform the Diocesan Office as soon as you are able.

# Smoke Alarms

## Looking After Your Smoke Alarm

Smoke alarms fitted in parsonage houses are generally connected to the mains power supply and have a rechargeable battery back-up.

To ensure full operation;

- Never disconnect or take the batteries out of your alarm (even if it goes off by mistake).
- Test the batteries every week.

To test, press the button until the alarm sounds. If it doesn't sound this would indicate either replacement batteries are required, or there is a fault.

Rechargeable batteries are necessary. In the event new batteries do not cure the problem, then phone the Diocesan Property Department as soon as you are able.

If your smoke alarm starts to beep on a regular basis, you need to replace the battery immediately.

- Remember to regularly dust the smoke alarm cover. Small insects and fluff can interfere with its performance.
- Most smoke detectors can be isolated by setting the RCCB device situated either within the electrical consumer unit, or adjacent unit. However, use this option as a "last resort" only.

### **\*Remember**

You are twice as likely to die in a fire if your smoke alarm doesn't work

- 90 people die each year because the battery in their smoke alarm was flat or missing
- Over half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents
- More than 5 fires a day are started by candles
- Every 3 days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette
- Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause around 7,000 house fires across the country every year

(\*Source – *Communities and Local Government –2007*)



# Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon Monoxide can be given off by appliances that burn fossil fuels such as coal, coke, charcoal, wood or oil. It is not just confined to gas fires or boilers.

It is odourless, colourless and tasteless which makes it difficult to detect, but the effects are deadly.

Please check that

- There is adequate ventilation in the room that houses the appliance and the ventilation is not sealed or blocked up. This particularly applies to designated ventilators near boilers and open fires (both floor and wall grilles).
- If the room has double glazing there is adequate ventilation.
- Chimneys and flues are professionally swept on a regular basis
- The throat plate is cleaned monthly
- Ash is removed regularly
- Appliances and flues are professionally serviced on an annual basis
- The flame in an appliance is blue and is not an orange or yellow colour
- There are no sooty stains on or just above appliances
- Coal or wood fires are not burning slowly or going out
- The fire is not difficult to light
- There is no smoke in the room
- Flueless portable heaters have adequate ventilation

If you suffer unexplained symptoms such as:

- Drowsiness
- Headaches
- Chest pains
- Giddiness
- Sickness
- Diarrhea
- Stomach pains

you could be suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning.

**Do Not Wait.** Switch off your appliances and see your doctor at once. If the suspect leak is from a gas appliance ring Transco immediately on 0800 111999. Inform the Diocesan Office as soon as possible

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# A Minimum Performance Standard for Parsonage Houses to Form the Basis of a Maintenance Policy

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## **Introduction**

It is assumed that the diocese will aim at houses, which basically provide accommodation specified the Church Commissioners' "Green Guide".

This maintenance policy takes its cue from the Church Commissioners' "Green Guide":

- Funds are limited and, therefore, houses should be designed to minimise future maintenance and be cheap to run.
- The aim should be for total economy, both initially and throughout the life of the building, and new houses should therefore be robust without being unnecessarily expensive to build.

## **Minimum Performance Standards**

To ensure that all houses conform to the same performance, the following minimum standards are adopted. The Property Department now uses this paper as authority for carrying out work to all clergy houses.

### **Structure**

Be structurally sound, wind and weather tight: roof and walls constructed of durable materials requiring minimum maintenance: all timber treated against decay.

### **Materials**

Windows, external doors, eaves, soffits, bargeboards and rainwater goods to be constructed from low maintenance materials.

Have a modern mains water supply pipe, pressurised hot water system and adequate systems for the disposal of foul and surface water designed to be easy to maintain.

### **Internal Finishes**

Internal surfaces to be finished in such a way as to protect the wall construction and be washable in the appropriate rooms.

Floors should be hard-wearing and washable in kitchen, bathrooms, w/c's, utility room and entrance hall.

Hall and study to be carpeted with a suitable material which is reasonably easy to clean.

The Houses Sub-Committee will ensure that suitable floor finishes are provided in the study, entrance hall, stairs and landing. Also, all cloakrooms, bathrooms and the kitchen and utility room.

Additionally, the Houses Sub-Committee will carry out decoration works to the study, hall, stairs and landing and kitchen to bring them up to an acceptable standard. Works to these rooms will be at the discretion of the Property Manager but will only be carried-out at the time of Move-In works.

### **Kitchens**

Should be fitted out with a minimum of 2.75 cubic metres of storage space, worktops of a durable hygienic material, stainless steel or other durable sink and drainer, space for cooker, fridge and dishwasher, together with appropriate plumbing.

### **Heating**

Space and water heating to be designed to achieve flexible use throughout the house using solid fuel, oil, gas or electricity as appropriate.

The system should be capable of achieving the following room temperatures:

Where Outside Temperature is -3°C

Landing and Hall = 18°C

Study = 21°C

Kitchen = 18°C

Living Rooms = 21°C

Bedrooms 18°C (bedroom  
with ensuite = 21°C)

Bathroom = 22°C

Cloaks/wc = 18°C

Showers are provided where practicable.

## **Insulation**

All roofs to be under felted with a minimum of 275mm loft insulation where practicable, all water pipes outside the shell or in the roof space, header tank and water cylinders to be lagged, cavity insulation where feasible and double glazing throughout to achieve a U value of at least 0.45 (w/m<sup>2</sup>k).

## **Electrical Installation**

All electrical works shall comply with current IEE regulations (18th edition) and when any alterations and additions are required then that work will also be carried out to the above regulations.

All circuits will incorporate a MCB/RCD distribution board (consumer unit). Where practical, we will install low energy lighting in the kitchen and study.

The following schedule identifies the minimum standard of power socket provision in parsonage house rooms.

- Hall: 1 double socket
- Double bedrooms: 3 double sockets
- Single bedrooms: 2 double sockets
- Landing: 1 double socket
- Lounge: 4 double sockets
- Dining Room: 3 double sockets
- Kitchen: 4 double sockets
- Study: 4 double sockets
- Utility room: 2 double sockets
- Porch: 1 double socket
- Garage socket: 1 double socket
- TV point in lounge
- 3 phone points (study, kitchen and main bedroom)
- Hot water cylinders to be fitted with immersion heaters supplied with a source of off-peak power.

## **Drives, Paths, Walls and Landscaping**

- Provide adequate boundary demarcation using durable low-
- Maintenance materials.
- Provide durable, easily maintained access to the front door, rear door and garage.
- Maintain all trees and shrubs so as to avoid threat of damage to person or property. This may mean that certain trees and shrubs will have to be removed from time to time.

## **Security**

- Mains operated smoke detectors to be fitted and maintained in working order by the Diocese.
- All windows, external doors and external lighting to be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with the best advice from the Police Crime Prevention officer and the building's insurers.
- Alarms are not provided or maintained.
- It is the responsibility of each occupant to maintain all fitted security lighting, including replacing bulbs.

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# Housing Repairs Criteria

## Priority Repair System

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### Typical Repairs and Target Completion Times

Priority 1: To be completed within 24 hours or where this is not possible a temporary holding repair to be carried out.

- A breakdown in power or lighting sockets.
- Total loss of electric power.
- Leaking water from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern.
- Total loss of water supply.
- Total loss of central heating (or both sources of hot water supply) during winter.
- Blocked or faulty wc (where only one wc exists), also blocked drain.
- Security of premises/defective window, door or lock.
- Total or partial loss of gas supply (customer side of meter).
- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler.
- Collapsed ceiling or ceiling in potentially dangerous condition.
- Footpath repairs where dangerous hazard exists.
- Leaking roof.
- Gas leak.
- Fallen trees where causing a danger to occupants or general public.
- Storm damage where causing a danger to occupants or general public.

Priority 2: Urgent Repairs to be completed within 5 working days.

- Partial loss of electric lighting or power.
- Partial loss of water supply.
- Taps which cannot be turned.
- Loose or detached banister or handrail.
- Rotten timber floorboard.
- Blocked w/c (where more than one w/c exists).
- Repairs to smoke alarm systems.
- Minor works on internal plumbing, waste fittings and water supplies.
- Slipping roof tiles, defective guttering, chimney stacks, etc., which would cause personal injury to passersby (if serious safety implications apply,

then work to be raised under Priority 1).

- Repairs to external lights.
- Faulty ball valves and syphons.
- Broken glazing, broken window frames and locks (where security of the premises is not at risk).
- Fencing and gate repairs (where safety and/or security is at risk).
- Footpath repairs where potential dangerous hazard exists.
- Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working.
- Fallen trees where not a danger.
- Storm damage where not a danger

Priority 3: To be completed within 20 working days.

- Minor cracks/leaks to external soil pipes (serious leaks to be dealt with under Priority 1).
- Repairs to wall and ceiling plaster.
- Repairs to fire surrounds and hearths.
- Repairs or replacement of defective sanitary ware.
- Roof defects and repairs to chimneys.
- Glazing (cracked or other minor defects).
- Defective flooring including floor tiles.
- Repairs to garage doors or roofs (if garage is out of use because door will not operate, to be dealt with under Priority 2. If a vehicle is locked inside to be dealt with under Priority 1).
- Fencing and gate repairs (other than those dealt with under Priority 2).
- Roofing repairs (other than repairs dealt with under Priority 1 and 2).
- Treatment of woodworm and/or dry rot.
- Renewal, repair and cleaning of gutters and rainwater pipes.
- Carpentry repairs.
- All joinery work not included in previous priorities.
- Footpath repairs.

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# Memorandum of Understanding

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- The Houses Committee is responsible for ‘maintaining the Diocesan stock of clergy houses in such a way as to preserve their long-term fitness for use and asset value and provide a service to the satisfaction of those who live in them.’
- It will undertake this work within very tight financial constraints. Its work will be most effective if those who live in the houses are kept informed of policies and programmes of work and see themselves as partners.
- The purpose of these notes is to outline the nature of that partnership and describe the responsibilities of each party.

## Responsibilities of the Houses Committee

- The Diocesan Houses Committee is authorised to manage the Diocesan housing stock.
- Houses sub-Committee wishes to provide an effective service, to establish a good relationship with clergy and to consult them when any works are envisaged which would have an impact on them or their family and to carry out work promptly and considerately.
- The Houses Sub-Committee is committed to achieving value for money and efficiency in all it does.

### Provision of Appropriate Property

- The Committee aims to provide an appropriate property, which will act as a suitable base from which a priest can provide their ministry to the community.
- The Committee recognises the difference in responsibilities and requirements from incumbents and priests in charge, stipendiary and those operating on a house for duty basis, to training curates and strives to be flexible in the types of accommodation provided, ensuring it is appropriate to the requirement.
- The Committee is aware of the recommendations contained within the Church Commissioners’ guidance document “Parsonages a Design Guide” (The Green Guide), including recommendations on distances from churches shared with the Terms of Service Measure; and



endeavour to apply the criteria appropriately when assessing a property for acquisition or new build.

- The Committee recognises that in acquiring property for training curates and for some house for duty posts, some of the facilities contained within parsonage houses may not be required.

### Maintenance Policy

- In order to preserve the long term value of clergy houses and ensure they are always fit to be used as family homes and centres of ministry, the sub-Committee has adopted a minimum standard for all houses.
- It is working towards a situation in which all clergy houses conform to this minimum standard. There are three types of maintenance programme:

#### Response

- Dealing with immediate repairs arising from breakages, and wear and tear as reported by clergy.

#### Cyclical

- Regular servicing and renewal of components such as heating boilers and external painting.

#### Planned

- Programmes of work to bring a house up to the minimum standard. Progress in implementing this policy may be constrained by the size of the Houses Committee's budget in any year.

### The Houses Committee will:

- carry out its obligations to provide clergy with a responsive, cyclical and planned maintenance service as described
- keep clergy informed by letter, telephone or copy works order, of what action has been taken following a request for repairs
- aim to achieve the following response times following a request for repairs:
  - Emergency Repairs**, defined as those which if not attend to could cause personal injury or serious structural damage – 24 hours
  - Urgent Repairs**, defined as those which, if not attended to, would lead to significant discomfort to those in the house – 5 working days
  - Routine Repairs**, defined as all other approved response repairs – 20 working days.

## **Vacancy and House Preparation Procedure**

- During a vacancy the Property Department will produce a Property Statement outlining any urgent and necessary planned work for the property. This will be shared with candidates at interview to ensure clergy are aware of what works will and will not be undertaken.
- After the arrival of the clergy person to their new post, the Property Department will arrange for a Condition report to be prepared. A copy of the report will be provided to the new occupant. This should be kept in a safe place as it will be referred to at subsequent inspections carried out as part of the quinquennial inspection and prior to vacation of the house.
- If the inspection prior to vacation reveals the house to be in an unacceptable condition (i.e. well beyond reasonable wear and tear), the Houses Committee may ask you to pay for works necessary to rectify.

## **Complaints Procedure**

- If the response to a request, or the method or manner of the Sub-Committee's work is not to the satisfaction of the clergy, please write to your Archdeacon, who will discuss the matter further.
- Clergy may also ask that their complaint be brought before the Houses Sub-Committee or may also refer to the members elected by their archdeaconry.

## CLERGY RESPONSIBILITY

The Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 and amendments states in Clause 13(1) that “The Incumbent shall have a duty to take proper care of a parsonage house, being a duty equivalent to that of a tenant to use premises in a tenant-like manner”.

- Clergy are expected to co-operate with the Houses sub-Committee in the performance of its work and to be responsible and diligent in the way they use and care for their home.
- The budget each year is used to maintain and improve the stock of approximately 150 houses; this is inclusive of buildings insurance, water charges and Council Tax. Most of this money comes from ministry share.
- Under the Provisions of the Clergy Terms of Service Regulations [14(e)], clergy should use the house provided as a “private residence for the office holder and his or her household”.
- Any other use of the property will require the prior consent of the Houses Committee.

### **Clergy are expected to be responsible for:**

- all minor repairs (except electrical) undertaking them if it is within their capacity;
- all repairs which do not arise as a result of fair wear and tear
- any accidental damage shall be reported to the Property department and repaired at the expense of the clergy
- The office will arrange for all repairs to be carried out and the resultant invoice will be passed on to the clergy for due payment
- clearing blocked drains and waste pipes
- replacing all broken glass
- the eradication of all pests including rats, mice and wasps
- Keeping the grounds in a clean and tidy condition including the proper management of hedges, shrubs (and trees where possible) so as to avoid inconvenience to other people or danger to the structure of the house.

Where trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order, or are within a Conservation Area, clergy must first obtain all necessary permissions from the local planning authority prior to carrying out any work on such identified trees;

- keeping all drives and paths free of weeds;
- not undertaking any alterations or improvements to the house (including electrical and plumbing works) without the written approval of the Property Manager
- Please note that any alterations or improvements made will be regarded as part of the house and should not be removed when clergy move on without the specific approval of the Houses Sub-Committee
- maintaining the internal decorations of the house to the standard which existed when they moved in

Insurance – the structure of all properties is insured. This does not include contents for which occupiers should make their own arrangements.

# Emergency Repairs

We recognise that in some special circumstances it may be necessary for you to call a contractor outside of normal office hours (Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm). As this will potentially involve extra expense for the Houses Sub-Committee, we have a duty to ensure that best practice is adopted and that all actions are fair and reasonable.

Please ensure that call outs are for Genuine Emergency Works Only

It is essential that you contact the Property Department (01353 652704 or on 07956 252325 for out of hours emergencies) in order to obtain a current emergency telephone number or ring one of the telephone numbers listed at the front of this document.

It must be stressed that the Houses Sub-Committee will only accept responsibility for out of hours repairs in a genuine and clear emergency that cannot wait until the next working day. We reserve the right to challenge any unsubstantiated call out and associated costs incurred.

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that you understand what we consider to be an emergency and needs to be dealt with immediately and those matters considered to be non-emergency and can be carried out as urgent or routine maintenance during normal working hours.

Please make all of your decisions in the full knowledge of the above and the following definitions:

## **What is an Emergency?**

For the purposes of this guide, an emergency is deemed to have occurred when an unforeseen circumstance arises that, if not dealt with quickly would;

- damage or lead to significant further damage to the property,
- endanger the occupant or cause them unreasonable discomfort,
- Render the property unfit or unsafe for habitation or insecure.

The following table is a guide as to the action that should be taken in a particular set of circumstances.

If you are in any doubt, during normal office hours, always consult the Property Department.

(ADEC = Approved Diocesan Emergency Contractor – if no response on Property Department’s emergency number) – 07956 252325

Repair/Fault	Emergency	Action Required
Blocked drains	Yes	Contact ADEC
Blocked sink/bath pipes	No	Report to Property department during normal office hours
Break-in	Yes	If security is compromised, report to the Police for insurance purposes and obtain a crime reference number
Burst pipes	Yes	Turn off the water at the stop cock. If electrics affected, turn off the power and call ADEC
Doors & door locks	No	If security is compromised on an external fitting call ADEC
Fire	Yes	Contact fire brigade and contact Property Department’s emergency phone as soon as possible
Gas leak	Yes	Turn off the supply and call Transco on 0800 111 999, then contact ADEC as soon as possible to
External guttering/ roof	No	If loose debris is a danger or the internal fabric of the building is immediately at risk call ADEC
Gale/wind damage	Yes	See External guttering/roof and Fencing Down as above. Report to Property Department as soon as possible
Leaking waste pipes	No	Catch water in a suitable container and report to Property Department
Lost keys	No	Your sole responsibility. If a locksmith is needed you should contact the ADEC, arrange and pay the next working day
No heating	Yes	Between October and April (or where young or elderly persons reside) call ADEC
No hot water	No	Report to Diocesan Property Department
No power	Yes	Check fuses/circuit breakers. If no visible fault, check with neighbours. If just your home, call the utility supplier or call ADEC
No water	Yes	Call the utility supplier (e.g. Anglian Water or Cambridge Water). Check with neighbours. If just your home, call ADEC
Security alarm malfunction	No	Your sole responsibility. Call your maintenance contractor direct
Smoke detector sounding off	No	Check for possibility of fire or smoke and call ADEC
Toilet won’t flush	No	Call Diocesan Property Department

# Notes

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Registered in England & Wales Registered Office:  
Diocesan Office,  
Bishop Woodford House,  
Barton Road,  
Ely  
CB7 4DX  
Tel: 01353 652701