



DIOCESE OF SODOR AND MAN
CODE OF PRACTICE FOR BENEFICE VACANCIES

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1 BENEFICE PROPERTY

1.1 Parsonage and Glebe

One of the changes made with the introduction of Common Tenure for all beneficed and licensed clergy is that the parsonage house and any glebe land of every benefice are now vested in and the responsibility of the Sodor and Man Diocesan Board of Finance ("the Board").

As a result the sequestrators of the benefice (see below) are no longer responsible for maintaining the parsonage house during a vacancy. However, the Board is dependent on the parish officials, in particular the churchwardens, for help in caring for the premises and keeping them secure while they are unoccupied. If the churchwardens have any difficulty in doing so, they are asked to notify the Archdeacon as soon as possible so that other arrangements can be made.

1.2 Sequestrators

It was formerly necessary for the Bishop to appoint sequestrators of every vacant benefice, who were responsible for managing the benefice property, receiving any benefice income and arranging for services to be held during the vacancy. The benefice property is now vested in the Board, and different arrangements are made for fees and services. Accordingly sequestrators are no longer appointed unless they are required in any particular case.

1.3 Procedure when vacancy begins

Once the parsonage house empty, the Archdeacon will instruct the Diocesan Surveyor to inspect it. At the conclusion of the inspection, the Archdeacon will meet the Surveyor on site and consider what repairs and decorations are essential and what are desirable. Consideration will also be given to other possibilities, as appropriate, eg. the letting of the house during the vacancy, or even its disposal and replacement.

1.4 Care and security

If the house is to stand empty for any period, however brief, especially in cold weather, the Board will arrange to have it heated 24 hours every day to a level between 10° and 15° C, and ensure that it is safely ventilated upstairs and downstairs. They will also arrange for regular, preferably weekly, inspections as to the condition and security of the house.

1.5 Telephone, gas and electricity

If a telephone is installed, it must be kept in the house and NOT disconnected. Similarly any broadband connection should be kept up.

Electricity and gas must also NOT be disconnected. The suppliers must be asked for an "interim" reading, not a "final" reading, to avoid re-connection charges.

2 PARSONAGE HOUSE¹

2.1 Rates

The Board is responsible for seeing that the general and other rates for the house are paid.

2.2 Garden

The Board will arrange with the Churchwardens to have the grass cut and the garden kept reasonably tidy. Fallen or dangerous trees should be removed. Expenses incurred may be charged to the Board.

As trees are property of the benefice, income from sale of timber must be paid to the Board.

2.3 Final survey

Before a new incumbent or priest-in-charge moves in, the Board will arrange for the Diocesan Surveyor to conduct another survey of the parsonage house to ensure that any work done has been completed to a satisfactory standard, and that the house is clean and fit for a family to move straight in. If the Surveyor considers that it is unfit, the Board will make any necessary arrangements eg. to rent suitable alternative accommodation, or to re-schedule the move and the licensing or induction.

2.4 Improvements

A vacancy is an opportunity for the house to undergo improvements and modernisation. The Board, in consultation with the PCC, will consider what works can reasonably be carried out.

3 MINISTRATIONS OF THE CHURCH

The following paragraphs do not apply where a priest-in-charge has been appointed.

3.1 Ordinary services

The Team Leader of the mission partnership is to arrange for clergy to take regular church services during the vacancy.

¹ For further information about parsonages see the Parsonages Handbook
http://www.sodorandman.im/archdeacon_of_man

3.2 Occasional services

The Team Leader should make arrangements with the Churchwardens for the holding of occasional services, ie. weddings, funerals and baptisms, including appointing a person to be contacted to fix the date and time of a service, to interview couples to settle the details of weddings and arrangements for banns or licence, to collect fees etc.

3.3 Payment of clergy

Stipendiary clergy do not receive payment for taking services during a vacancy.

Fees payable to non-stipendiary or retired clergy for taking services are the responsibility of the Board. A cleric who conducts a service should complete a claim form (see Appendix) and send it to the Team Leader, who will countersign it and forward it to the Diocesan Treasurer for payment by the Board.

4 LICENSING OF PRIEST-IN-CHARGE

4.1 Time and order of service

If a Priest-in-charge is to be licensed during a vacancy, the service of Licensing will be arranged between the Bishop's office and the Churchwardens. If the benefice has more than one parish church, the service may take place in one church only or in more than one church, to be agreed after consultation with the Archdeacon and the Bishop. The Bishop will preach.

When the date is known, the Bishop's Chaplain will provide an electronic template for the Order of Service, and will negotiate with the Priest over details, including music and readings. The Bishop's office will arrange for the printing of the Order of Service.

4.2 Rehearsal

The Archdeacon will arrange for a rehearsal of the Service beforehand. The following should be present:

- Archdeacon
- Team leader
- Cleric to be priest-in-charge
- Churchwardens
- Organist
- Others directly involved in the service, at the Archdeacon's request.

The rehearsal will be conducted by the Archdeacon and the Bishop's Chaplain.

4.3 Invitations

Invitations should be sent out by the Churchwardens and the Parochial Church Council, and should include:

- local MLC's
- local MHK's
- Mayor/Chairman of Commissioners
- Captain of the Parish
- clergy of other denominations
- Vicar General
- all diocesan clergy*

all Readers*

*If seating is limited, then invitations will be sent to clergy and Readers of the mission partnership only, plus the Team Leaders of the other mission partnerships.

Specific invitations need to go to the spouses of the Bishop, Archdeacon and new Priest-in-charge (who would not normally receive an invitation).

4.4 Arrangements

Robing: where possible, the vestry will be used by the Bishop, Archdeacon, Team Leader and new Priest-in-charge for robing. Other clergy and Readers will robe in another convenient location chosen by the Churchwardens.

Parking: spaces should be reserved for:

- Bishop
- Archdeacon
- Team Leader
- Vicar General
- new Priest-in-charge

The Churchwardens are to inform the local Police of the service and any potential parking difficulties.

Seating in church: the Churchwardens are to ensure that seating reservations are made for the clergy, Readers, clergy of other denominations, and invited spouses as noted above.

4.5 Collections

The application of the collection is to be determined jointly by the Priest-in-charge and the Parochial Church Council, after deduction of the cost of printing of the order of service (the amount to be ascertained by the PCC treasurer from the Bishop's secretary). The Bishop requests that a share of the collection be donated to his Discretionary Fund.

4.6 Refreshments

Refreshments after the service are to be arranged by the Churchwardens and Parochial Church Council at a location which is convenient to the church where the service is taking place.

5 INDUCTION OF INCUMBENT

5.1 Time and order of service

When a new Incumbent has been nominated, the service of Induction will be arranged between the Bishop's office and the Churchwardens. (The service normally includes the Institution or Collation of the Incumbent.) If the benefice has more than one parish church, or in the case of a plurality, the Bishop may direct that the induction shall take place in one church only. The Bishop will preach.

When the date is known, the Bishop's Chaplain will provide an electronic template for the Order of Service, and will negotiate with the Incumbent-designate over details, including music and readings. The Bishop's office will arrange for the printing of the Order of Service.

5.2 Rehearsal

The Archdeacon will arrange for a rehearsal of the Service beforehand. The following should be present:

- Archdeacon
- Team Leader of the mission partnership
- new Incumbent
- Churchwardens
- Organist
- Others directly involved in the service, at the Archdeacon's request

The rehearsal will be conducted by the Archdeacon and the Bishop's Chaplain.

5.3 Invitations

Invitations should be sent out by the Churchwardens and the Parochial Church Council, and should include:

- local MLC's
- local MHK's
- Mayor/Chairman of Commissioners
- Captain of the Parish
- Vicar General
- Diocesan Registrar
- clergy of other denominations
- all diocesan clergy*
- all Readers*

*If seating is limited, then invitations will be sent to clergy and Readers of the mission partnership only, plus the Team Leaders of the of the other mission partnerships.

Specific invitations need to go to the spouses of the Bishop, Archdeacon and new Priest-in-charge (who would not normally receive an invitation).

5.4 Arrangements

Robing: where possible, the vestry will be used for robing by the Bishop, Archdeacon, Diocesan Registrar, Team Leader and new Incumbent. Other clergy and Readers will robe in another convenient location chosen by the Churchwardens.

Parking: spaces should be reserved for:

- Bishop
- Archdeacon
- Vicar General
- Diocesan Registrar
- Team Leader
- new Priest-in-charge

The Churchwardens are to inform the local Police of the service and any potential parking difficulties.

Seating in church: the Churchwardens are to ensure that seating reservations are made for the Diocesan Registrar, clergy, Readers, clergy of other denominations, and invited spouses as noted above.

5.5 Collections

The application of the collection is to be determined jointly by the Incumbent and the Parochial Church Council, after deduction of the cost of printing of the order of service (the amount to be ascertained by the PCC treasurer from the Bishop's secretary). The Bishop requests that a share of the collection be donated to his Discretionary Fund.

5.6 Refreshments

Refreshments after the service are to be arranged by the Churchwardens and Parochial Church Council at a location which is convenient to the church where the service is taking place.

Diocesan Registrar

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