



# Policy on Closure and Redundancy of Churches

## Principles to Consider

- **The closure of a church and subsequent redundancy is a decision that no PCC or congregation comes to without a great deal of soul searching, prayer and thought.**
- **The closure and redundancy of a church can be a very emotional and upsetting matter for those and their families who have worshipped there for generations and who may have families buried in the churchyard.**
- **In many cases the cost of maintaining a building is a major contributory factor.**
- **In some cases, the ageing congregation together with deaths and members becoming housebound are also contributory factors.**
- **The need for the process of closure and redundancy to be as swift and painless as possible.**
- **Once a church is closed and the final service held Incumbents and parishioners frequently become detached from the closure and redundancy process.**
- **A process that should take a maximum of 6 months is often taking over a year and, in some case, much longer. This is disturbing for parishioners but also has financial implications for the Parish, Diocese and Province.**

## Policy

### 1) *The Decision to Close*

- It is vital that before a decision to close is made, the Incumbent/PCC must consult with the Archdeacon at the earliest opportunity as the Archdeacon will advise the Churches and Pastoral Committee (CPC) of the background and circumstances of the proposed closure.
- The CPC will require a certified copy of the minute making the decision to close and requesting that the CPC advise the Bishop accordingly.
- The CPC Chairman should be contacted in order to begin the process; the Chairman will advise Incumbents and parishes as to the procedure to follow.
- A proposed timetable for closure should be submitted (e.g. the date that it is proposed to hold the last service, this should be at least 6 months ahead).
- The Policy on Church Finances should be followed.
- The CPC Chairman will advise the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) of the proposed church closure in order to make them aware re: Ministry Share and Church Insurance.
- The Secretary of the DBF will notify parishes in relation to Ministry Share and Church Insurance.

### 2) *Preliminaries*

In the event of a proposal that a church close and be made redundant there are a number of legal preliminaries in accordance with the Constitution of the Church in Wales that need to be followed and completed prior to redundancy to enable the Churches and Pastoral Committee to advise the Bishop.

- A resolution by the PCC that the church should close with a view to it being declared redundant
- The opinion of the Incumbent, Church Wardens and PCC as to what the future use of the building could be.
- Who possesses legal title to the Church Building (in most cases the Representative Body, though there are a few reverters in place).
- A report from the Diocesan Advisory Committee on the historical, architectural and artistic merits of the church, together with recommendations on the course of action to be taken.
- The future use of the contents of the Church – removal of items will require a Faculty (proof of this being granted is required).
- The future and care of the Churchyard (See Policy on Churchyards).

### **3) Church Contents**

- a) When considering the Contents of the Church and possible removal of items the Church in Wales Policy on the Disposal of Contents must be adhered to.
- b) At the earliest opportunity advice should be sought from the Archdeacon and the Secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee.
- c) Under no circumstances should items from the Church be returned to the individuals or families of those who gave them unless this has been agreed by a Deed of Faculty. All contents require a Faculty to be granted before they may be removed.
- d) Fixtures and fittings are dealt with separately and the Church in Wales Policy on Disposal of Church Contents must be followed. Advice may be sought from the DAC Secretary and the Property Department of the Representative Body.
- e) If another church wishes to receive an item, they must have a Faculty to do this.

### **4) Official Date of Closure**

It is now the policy of the Diocese that the official date of closure and that of redundancy will be the same date. This means that a church will be regarded by the Diocese and Province as remaining open until all of the preliminaries (section 2) have been completed. Churches will be responsible for Ministry Share and Insurance up until the official date of closure.

### **5) Closure on Health and Safety Grounds (or withdrawal of Insurance)**

In the event that a church is closed on the grounds of health and safety and deemed to be unsafe leading to a withdrawal of insurance, a decision will need to be made swiftly as to whether the necessary work is to be carried out or whether the building should be made redundant. All churches in this category will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and the CPC Chairman must be informed immediately.

**Ven Paul Mackness**  
**Churches and Pastoral Committee Chairman**

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#### **Useful Contact Details**

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