



**DIOCESE OF
ST DAVIDS**

DIOCESAN PARSONAGE BOARD

GUIDELINES FOR CLERICS

St David's Diocesan Parsonage Board

Living in a Parsonage House – Guidance for Clergy

Introduction

This booklet is a set of guidelines on occupying and caring for a Parsonage Board house, that is, rectory, vicarage, team vicar's house, curate's house, house for duty, archdeaconry, deanery or canon's house. It is not an exhaustive list of all the things that you might confront and it is not a legal document; the legal framework under which you occupy the house and how the Parsonage Board operates is described in Chapter X of the Constitution of The Church in Wales.

2012

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Please complete the acknowledgement as below and return to :

The Diocesan Parsonage Inspector
Diocesan Office, Abergwili, Carmarthen SA31 2JG.

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Parish ----- RB Number D/ -----

Parsonage-----

Incumbent/Curate -----

I acknowledge receipt of the Guidelines for Clerics, and accept this forms the basis of the occupation of the house as far as the Parsonage Board is concerned.

Signed -----

Date -----

THE CHURCH IN WALES

All Parsonage property in The Church in Wales is held on trust for the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Church by The Representative Body of the Church in Wales. Day to Day management is the responsibility of The Parsonage Board.

The Parsonage Board aims to provide adequate and comfortable accommodation for the clergy of the Diocese. Sometimes, in the furtherance of this aim, disruption will be caused in the life of clergy and their families, and sometimes, because of financial pressures, it will not be possible to accede to specific requests. On these occasions your patience will be appreciated. The maintenance of parsonage houses is a partnership between the Parsonage Board and the occupants concerned. The Diocesan Inspector will be pleased to advise on any matters relating to the occupation and care of the premises.

Duties of the Parsonage Board

Working within available budgets, the Parsonage Board will normally:

- Maintain and insure the structure and exterior of the building
- Provide and maintain the installations for space and water heating and sanitation
- Maintain all fixtures and fittings that are deemed part of the structure of the house
- Install and maintain a burglar alarm
- Ensure that gas/oil/solid fuel appliances are maintained and certified safe on an annual basis,
- Arrange for chimney cleaning where associated with above items.
- Clear gutters, downpipes, and gullies, annually
- Arrange for the property to be inspected at least every five years, and to be externally decorated every 5 years (sooner or later, depending upon location)
- Carry out a survey of the interior condition prior to occupation and vacation of the property; this will include a photographic record, providing a reference point for inspections during and at the end of the occupancy
- Arrange tree surgery where appropriate on health & safety grounds, and good housekeeping. This only applies to mature trees, and high hedges.
- Maintenance and emptying of septic tanks, and cesspits.
- Provide, and maintain cookers.
- Carry out Improvements when appropriate and as funds permit. Items include structural improvements, installation of central heating, double/ secondary glazing,

Clerics are provided with a house to fulfil their ministerial duties. The responsibilities of the cleric are set out in Chapter X of the Constitution of the Church in Wales,

Duties of Clergy

Clergy are responsible for:

- Anything that belongs to those living in the house
- Provision of house contents insurance
- Fuses, light bulbs, lampshades, batteries for doorbells
- Provision of telephone equipment, electric fires and TV aerials/satellite dishes. Clergy are responsible for the installation and maintenance of TV and radio aerials and should ensure these conform to local planning regulations (contact your local authority or the Diocesan Inspector for advice). You must seek the written approval of the Parsonage Board before erecting a satellite dish.
- Maintenance of internal decoration (see below) Parsonage Board will consider redecoration of Stairwells where there is a Health & Safety consideration.
- Maintenance of gardens (see below) except mature trees/hedges, see aforementioned.
- Keeping all internal waste pipes and traps clear of debris, hair, etc.
- Keeping chimneys and flues clean and swept annually and at vacation of house, except where noted under duties of The Parsonage Board aforementioned.
- The cost of repairing items damaged due to misuse or neglect
- Any damage caused by their domestic animals
- Pest control issues should be initially addressed to your local authority; if they will not provide a service contact the Diocesan Inspector.
- Report to the Parsonage Inspector of any external/internal repairs that may be required.
- Multi Fuel stoves, to include wood burners.

Incumbents are to arrange for a chimney clean, at their expense, at a maximum period of 12 months, more frequently if stove has high usage. A service is to be arranged by the Incumbent every 12 months, forward the invoice to the Inspector for reimbursement. It is essential that a competent company is used for the service.

It is not expected that clergy will necessarily carry out all these maintenance items themselves, but may need to employ and pay local contractors accordingly.

Clergy may not make any structural alteration or addition to a parsonage or to the permanent fittings without the written consent of the Diocesan Parsonage Board.

You are asked to inform the Diocesan Inspector of any problems with the property that might lead to structural damage or deterioration/health & safety risk, or expense if left unattended. The Inspector should also be advised of any damage to the property/curtilage, fixtures or fittings, which could be the subject of an insurance claim.

What to do in an Emergency Out of Hours (after 5 pm), at Weekends and during Public Holidays

When there is a need for **urgent** repairs, e.g. blocked pipes, roof leaks, broken window panes, blocked drains, etc. you should instruct a local tradesman or public utility to carry out the necessary repairs immediately. You can also try to contact a Parsonage Board contractor using the Emergency list on the St David's web site, (look under Resources link) The Diocesan Inspector should be informed at the earliest opportunity. Repairs, which are not urgent, should be referred to the Diocesan Inspector on the next working day.

Maintenance of Internal Decorations

The Parsonage Board expects to provide clergy, on their arrival in a new parish/benefice, with a house in good internal decorative order, although not necessarily newly decorated throughout. The condition of the house will be photographed to provide a benchmark for future inspections and clergy are expected to return the house to the Parsonage Board in similar condition. Clergy are required to keep the house in good decorative order, to the satisfaction of the Parsonage Board.

The decoration can be to the occupier's individual taste but consideration should be given to the next occupier. Most houses will be provided with pastel or neutral shades to walls and it is expected that any stronger colours or specific designs will be removed and the walls returned to pastel or neutral shades before vacating; this will be advised at the Vacancy Inspection. A record of colours and materials used in decorations would be helpful in the ongoing maintenance of the interior. Woodwork and ceilings should not be painted in colours other than white or ivory.

While recognising the desire to display paintings, photographs, etc. and to fix items to walls it is expected that on vacation of the house, the outgoing clergy will remove such fittings, fill holes and make good decorations.

A check will be made at the time of the quinquennial inspection to ensure that decorations are maintained to a good standard. Where decorations are not so maintained, you will be given a reasonable time to undertake the works.

Failure to comply with the above, during occupancy or at vacating, will result in a charge for making good.

See previous sections concerning stairwells.

Dealing with Damp

Advise the Diocesan Inspector of any leaking pipes, leaking or overflowing gutters, or other sources of water ingress/signs of internal dampness to enable prompt repair.

Make use of extraction/ventilation equipment at all times and promptly report any faults. Ventilate the house by opening windows as often as possible.

Ensure air bricks and ventilators are kept open and clear; keep furniture, etc. away from internal vents and keep ground levels below external air bricks. The provision of air via ventilators and airbricks in rooms with gas appliances is essential for your own safety.

Maintenance of Gardens

Clergy are required to undertake general maintenance and upkeep of grounds and gardens, including the trimming of hedges – a maximum height of approx. 2.4 m is suggested to help ease of maintenance and to maintain privacy for the clergy or neighbours - and pruning of shrubs to prevent overgrowth. Lawns should be mown regularly. Hard or gravel surfaces such as paths and drives should be regularly cleared of weeds, and treated with a proprietary weedkiller as required. Fallen dead leaves should be swept up. Paths must be kept clear of any growth.

Training plants, particularly ivy, up the walls of houses is discouraged and any such growth must be cut back to prevent clogging of gutters and growth into roof spaces, and damage to walls.

Do not plant new shrubs or trees within 3.0 m of the house or 1½ times the mature height of the tree/shrub whichever is the smaller.

Substantial/mature trees/hedges are the responsibility of the Parsonage Board and any concerns are to be reported to the Diocesan Inspector as soon as they become apparent; clergy should undertake no work to trees.

Fixtures and Fittings

Any fixtures - including shelving, fitted wardrobes or cupboards, fitted kitchen units, working surfaces, sink units, integral cooking appliances and extractor hoods, bathroom and lavatory fittings, showers and tiling – existing at the date of occupation, or added thereafter by the

Parsonage Board, are deemed to belong to the Parsonage Board. None of these items may be removed or altered without the express permission of the Parsonage Board.

Clergy should always obtain permission of the Parsonage Board to install any fixtures and fittings within a Parsonage Board property.

Electrical Installations

Electrical installations are inspected regularly to help ensure the health and safety of the occupiers. Any concerns about the electrical installation, e.g. dimming lights, sparking sockets or switches, faulty sockets or frequent failure of light bulbs, should be reported to the Diocesan Inspector as soon as possible. Do not make alterations or additions to the electrical installation under any circumstances. Make yourself familiar with the location of the main trip switches for your house to enable a rapid response to any emergency.

Gas, Oil, Solid Fuel Fired Heating Systems and Appliances (to include Rayburns / Agas)

All systems are serviced annually and inspected for condition and to help ensure safety. The contract covers all elements of the heating and hot water systems and gas fires, and the inspection, for safety, of gas cookers, including LPG systems. Make yourself familiar with the location of the emergency shut off valve, usually adjacent to the meter, to enable a rapid response to any emergency.

Remove air (bleed) radiators only with the pump and boiler turned off, to prevent more air being drawn into the system. The Board is in the process of fitting Carbon Monoxide Detectors to all properties over a 4 year rolling programme.

Multi Fuel Stoves, to include wood burners.

Incumbents are to arrange for a chimney clean, at their expense, at a maximum period of 12 months, more frequently if stove has high usage. A service is to be arranged by the Incumbent every 12 months, forward the invoice to the Inspector for reimbursement. It is essential that a competent company is used for the service.

Water

Report to the Diocesan Inspector, as soon as they become apparent, any water leaks from pipes, appliances or heating equipment. Do not make alterations or additions to the water systems. Consider the installation of a water meter to reduce costs and to encourage water saving; this also helps reduce costs to the parish/benefice during vacancies. Make yourself familiar with the location of the main stop tap to enable a rapid response to any emergency.

Septic Tanks and Cesspits

Septic tanks and cesspits shall be emptied as needed.

The Inspector should be contacted to arrange emptying, at the Boards expense.

Security and Fire

Security of the house and of its occupants is of great importance and for this reason an intruder alarm system is fitted to all houses.* Many systems include fire detection. The alarm system is covered by a service contract; providing an annual service and emergency response when needed.

If you have any particular concerns about security of the house and grounds, or about vandalism, please contact the Diocesan Inspector for advice.

* The Board is in the process of carrying out this work over the next 4 years.

Business Use

No business uses whatsoever, such as sub-letting or bed and breakfast, are to be carried out in the property, including outbuildings.

Parish Use of Parsonages

The parsonage is primarily the home and study of the cleric whose family circumstances will differ from one individual to another as will their approach to ministry. Some clergy choose to allow parish activities to take part within the house, eg; parish meetings. Such arrangements happen by grace and favour of the resident cleric, and cannot be imposed on their successors. It is to be emphasised that the parsonage should not be regarded as an alternative facility for a proper parish meeting room. Indeed difficulties could arise in this instance under the Disability, and Discrimination act, and Health & Safety legislation in general. There could also be personal security issues.

Legal Notices

If any legal notice is served on you, concerning the parsonage, such as planning applications on adjacent property, Party wall notice, a compulsory purchase order or a proposal from CADW to list the parsonage, you should pass these on, without acknowledgement or reply to the Diocesan Inspector as soon as possible. Any delay could result in the opportunity being lost to make objection to the proposals, which could, if accepted, seriously affect the amenities and value of the property. Under no circumstances should clergy on their own account respond to the notice.

Insurance

The Representative Body (RB) insures the fabric of the building and any fixtures for which they are responsible. The Church In Wales' insurers, the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group plc, provide cover for the RB against any third party claims for which they are legally liable arising from damage or injury sustained whilst a third party is on Parsonage Board premises and whilst the clergy are carrying out "business duties" on behalf of the Church; this includes damage caused by any part of the structure, for example, falling roof tiles or slates.

If any parish possessions are stored or held on Parsonage Board premises, insurance cover must be independently arranged by the parish/benefice. Clergy are strongly discouraged from storing any flammable materials belonging to the parish, such as fuel for lawn mowers or lawn mowers filled with petrol.

Access

Access to Parsonage Board property should be offered to **all** the Parsonage Board's representatives, and agents, (of whatever discipline) in particular the Diocesan Inspector and contractors at appropriate, and reasonable times in order to inspect and carry out works. Whenever possible this will be at a time mutually agreed with the parties concerned. However, if appointments are not observed and costs are incurred in abortive visits, including consequential loss, the Parsonage Board reserves the right to pass these charges onto the persons concerned. In the case of vacant property where works are in progress, visits must be only by appointment with the Diocesan Inspector and contractor.

No direct instructions may be given to contractors, or other agents, any such instruction must only be given by the Parsonage Board Inspector.

Contractors

The Parsonage Board employs a variety of approved and trusted contractors to carry out works of repair and improvement. Any comments, or other complaints, are to be directed to the Diocesan Inspector, as soon as issues arise, to help early resolution; issues can include quality, continuity, failure to attend at appointed times, attitude and cleanliness.

Clergy must not, under any circumstances, give direct instructions to contractors, employed by the Parsonage Board. Any such action resulting in additional cost, not agreed with the Diocesan Inspector, will be charged to the member of the clergy.

The Diocesan Inspector is always willing to invite contractors recommended by parishes, particularly those with church connections, to the approved list and to carry out work provided that it can be shown the contractor is suitably qualified and experienced and can conform to statutory legislation. Details of experience, capacity and specifically appropriate insurance cover should be submitted to the Diocesan Inspector. The final choice of

contractor remains with the Parsonage Board who must have regard to the cost and the reputation of the contractor as well as to any local connections.

Vacating the house

Notify the Diocesan Secretary and Inspector as soon as possible after giving notice to the Bishop that the house will be vacated. Early notification will enable an Inspection to be carried out by the Diocesan Inspector, with the Area Dean, providing sufficient time for you to carry out any remedial works that are the responsibility of the clergy and for a follow-up inspection where necessary. Any damage or deterioration to the property for which you are responsible, other than normal wear and tear, which has not been made good within a given time will result in a charge being made to make good. Advise the Diocesan Secretary and Inspector of the official moving date as soon as that is known.

Leave the house, including the roof void and outbuildings clean and empty of rubbish and personal possessions and in a condition suitable to be re-occupied. Ensure all equipment belonging with the house is clean and in safe working order.

It is your responsibility to arrange all utilities to be transferred when you leave or move into a new house. Read all meters and arrange for payment of final bills; do not request the disconnection of services. Set up redirection of all mail to your new address or cancel unwanted subscriptions.

When a parsonage house is unoccupied during a vacancy, responsibility for the custody of the house passes to the Area Dean and the Churchwardens as described in The Constitution of The Church in Wales, Vol. I, Chapter X.

See Vacancy Procedure, a quick checklist for clergy and churchwardens, Appendix 1.

Complaints

We realise that maintaining an estate having a value of many millions of pounds and spread across the Diocese is a complex matter and occasionally mistakes will be made. If you have a problem with the way work has been carried out or any other difficulty, please let the Inspector at the Diocesan Office know. It would be helpful if you could identify the name of the contractor responsible. Final recourse can be made to the Chairman of the Diocesan Parsonage Board, whose name and address can be found in the Diocesan Year book.

Appendix 1 Vacancy Procedure – a quick Checklist for Clergy and Churchwardens

Clergy:

- Advise the Diocesan Office of giving notice of vacancy as soon as possible
- Confirm official moving date as soon as it is known
- Ensure decorations are in good order, in compliance with Vacancy Inspection
- Fill all redundant fixing holes and touch-in decorations, as above
- Clear the house, loft and any outbuildings of all personal belongings and rubbish
- Clean thoroughly the house and all equipment remaining
- Report any remaining faults to house or equipment remaining
- Tidy the garden and mow the grass, subject to time of year
- Advise utility suppliers of moving date and take readings and advise where final bills are to be sent; DO NOT have utilities 'cut off'
- Set up post redirection service and cancel unwanted subscriptions
- Arrange transfer of responsibility for bills to the parish/benefice; provide service suppliers' contact details and account numbers
- Hand over all keys fully labelled for their use and advise the alarm code – to the Area Dean and/or Churchwarden, one set to be available for Diocesan Inspector
- Identify the day and location for the collection of refuse

Area Deans and Churchwardens:

- Check final meter readings
- Ensure the house is clear and clean and the garden tidy
- Take responsibility for keys
- Liaise with the Diocesan Inspector with regard to access for works
- Regularly check for post
- Pay utility bills as they arise
- Maintain the garden
- The Parsonage Inspector will arrange to drain the water and heating systems down to avoid the potential for burst pipes. It is not sufficed to leave the heating on low.
- Inspect the house fortnightly; check for security, including window locks
- Advise the Diocesan Inspector of any issues relating to the condition or security of the house and its grounds
- Consider the installation of a water meter, particularly if the vacancy is expected to be lengthy, to save costs on water rates and to encourage water saving
- Costs relating to utility bills and garden maintenance can be reclaimed from the Diocesan Secretary as a rate to be advised periodically
- For detailed information refer to Handling a Vacancy – Good Practice for Clergy and Churchwardens



Bwrdd Persondai Esgobaeth Tyddewi
Swyddfa'r Esgobaeth
Abergwili, Caerfyrddin SA31 2JG
Ffôn 01267 236145
Ffacs 01267 234754

St Davids Diocesan Parsonage Board
Diocesan Office
Abergwili, Carmarthen SA31 2JG
Tel 01267 236145
Fax 01267 234754

Arolygydd Bwrdd Persondai **Mr Mike Scutt** MRICS FCIOB FASI Parsonage Board Inspector
Ysgrifennydd yr Esgobaeth **Mr Howard Llewellyn** Diocesan Secretary

Ref: MJS

Dear

MAINTENANCE of PARSONAGE GARDENS

The Diocesan Inspector has advised that during some interregnums the gardens of vacant parsonages are not being maintained, with the grass being allowed to grow up, etc.

An unkempt garden highlights that a property is empty and creates a problem of security. It can also deter a possible candidate from accepting the post, as the parsonage grounds look overgrown and untidy.

Would you please ensure that during an interregnum the lawns are mown regularly and the gardens kept in a reasonable state.

If the Parsonage Board has to arrange for this work to be done, the cost would be re-invoiced to the Benefice.

The cost of maintaining the garden can be included in a Custodian Expenses claim provided relevant receipts accompany the claim.

Yours sincerely

M J Scutt

M J Scutt MRICS FCIOB FASI
Diocesan Inspector