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Southwell & Nottingham Diocesan Board of Finance

# The Parsonage House

A Guide for Occupants and Parochial Church Councils

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- How to look after it
- How its maintenance is paid for
- Your privileges and responsibilities

November 2022



# Preface

In Southwell and Nottingham Diocese, we believe that housing matters. Our policy is to maintain a good standard for clergy, other occupants and their families. Feeling comfortable, secure and happy at home makes for better ministry and is part of the Church's proper pastoral care for its people.

This Guide tells you what the policies are for your parsonage house and gives much good advice besides. Please read it carefully and keep it to hand.



Phil Williams  
Archdeacon of Nottingham



Victoria Ramsey  
Archdeacon of Newark

# The Property Office

The Property Office, based at the Diocesan Office in Southwell, is responsible for the day-to-day management of all diocesan houses. All matters relating to the repair and maintenance of your house should be brought to the attention of its staff, who are:

Mr Ian Greaves  
Diocesan Surveyor  
(01636) 817214  
Departmental Policy/Housing Matters  
Normal working hours:  
Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 5:00pm



Mrs Clare Hardy  
Property Administrator  
(01636) 817213  
General Enquiries about Housing/Routine Maintenance  
Normal working hours:  
Monday – Friday 8.30am – 2:30pm



All repair and maintenance work is carried out by private contractors and is supervised by the Diocesan Surveyor. The Property Office works within the budget it is allocated by Diocesan Synod.

The Property Office's main aims are to:

- (i) Provide and maintain good quality housing, cost effectively, for the clergy and their families
- (ii) Carry out necessary work to houses quickly and efficiently with the minimum of disruption to the occupants.

# Current parsonages standard provisions

1. All sanitary ware will be white and from an approved range.
2. All wall tiles to kitchen, bathroom, etc., will be 150 x 150mm white ceramic tiles.
3. Kitchen units will be selected from an approved range.
4. Sheet vinyl flooring will be provided to the kitchen, utility, bathroom and Ground Floor W.C. areas.
5. Fitted wardrobes will be provided to two bedrooms.
6. Electrical installation will be safety checked at quinquennial inspection and updated as required.
7. Smoke alarms will be fitted.
8. All heating appliances will be serviced annually by a Gas Safe registered heating engineer appointed by the Parsonages Board. The costs will be met from the Parsonages Board budget.
9. An electric fire will be provided where possible to the sitting room and to the study.
10. Entrance gates will be provided where possible to all parsonage houses.
11. Internal redecoration is the responsibility of the occupant. However, upon the appointment of a new incumbent the Parsonages Board will pay for the redecoration of the hall/staircase/landing and any room in which major works have been carried out. The Parsonages Board will also reimburse the new occupant reasonable costs for the purchase of decorating materials to allow him/her or the parish to decorate other parts of the house.
12. Intruder alarms will be provided to all parsonage houses and will be maintained annually from the Parsonages Board budget.
13. Cookers are not provided. Each occupant must provide his/her own cooker at his/her own expense. The Parsonages Board will pay the reasonable costs involved in connecting the occupant's appliance.
14. During a vacancy, wherever possible, all parsonage houses will be let on a six month assured shorthold tenancy agreement

# Responsibility for repairs

The diocesan responsibility under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 is:

1. The structure and exterior of the building including boundary walls, fences, etc.
2. The installations for space heating, water heating and sanitation and the supply apparatus for water, gas, oil and electricity.
3. The payment of Council Tax, water rates and insurance of the structure.
4. All fixtures and fittings in the property. These would normally include fitted kitchen cupboards, bathroom fittings, etc.

## Procedure for determining repairs

### 1. Quinquennial Repairs

Under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972, the Board is required to have each house inspected at five-yearly intervals. The survey will be carried out by the Diocesan Surveyor, who will assess the repairs required both immediately and within the next five years. The repairs specified in the surveyor's report refer only to the fabric of the house, driveway and fences, etc., but do not include internal redecoration, which is the occupant's responsibility and is dealt with separately in this booklet.

The Diocesan Surveyor will send his report to you for comment and amendment as necessary and he will then obtain competitive quotations to have the work carried out by reputable contractors. The Property Office will be responsible for supervising the work and ensuring it is carried out to an acceptable standard. Under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972, the Parsonages Board has the right to gain access to the house at any reasonable time and commission a report on its condition by the Diocesan Surveyor.

### 2. Improvements

As part of the quinquennial survey process you will be asked if there are any improvements or modifications required which would make a real difference to the way the house works. It should be noted that requests for improvements will be judged individually on their merits and will only be approved if they comply with Parsonages Board current policy and finance is available.



### 3. Interim Repairs and Maintenance

These are repairs which arise from time to time and are necessary to keep the house and outbuildings in good order between quinquennial inspections. When you require assistance with a repair, please contact the Property Office (see back of booklet) either by telephone, email, letter, or in person, who will be able to arrange for repairs to be carried out as quickly as possible. When repairs are ordered via the Property Office you will receive a copy of the repair order which will indicate the contractor who will carry out the work and your contact details.

Small repairs, up to the value of £250, can be dealt with locally by the occupant, who should then send the invoice to the Property Office for payment. Work which is likely to be in excess of this amount should not be arranged without first seeking the approval of the Property Office.

It is recognised that it may not be possible to follow this procedure when genuine emergencies arise, i.e., at weekends and outside normal office hours. In these situations you should refer to the section on “Emergency Repairs”.

Any defects which may cause deterioration to the fabric of the building should be reported to the Property Office without delay.

### 4. Central Heating Boilers and Heating Appliances

The annual servicing of all central heating boilers and gas heating appliances is arranged and paid for by the Property Office.

### 5. Trees

Ideally, trees should be inspected by an expert on an annual basis, but the cost of doing so would be prohibitive. Therefore, when an occupant feels that a tree in the parsonage grounds is in need of attention, he/she should inform the Property Office, which will obtain a tree surgeon’s report and quotation to carry out any necessary work. Many trees are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders and it is very important that they are dealt with through the Property Office so that, if necessary, the Local Authority can be consulted.

Please note that tree surgery by contractors is very expensive and the pruning and lopping of saplings, shrubs and fruit trees should be carried out by the occupant as part of routine garden maintenance.



## Occupants' responsibilities

One of the aims of the Diocesan Parsonages Policy is to make best use of the funds available to ensure that our properties are well -maintained and as economical to run as possible. This can only be achieved with your co-operation. Occupants have a duty to take proper care of the house and garden in a good tenant-like manner with all the responsibilities that entails.

You are therefore required to keep the house, fixtures and fittings, floors, windows, etc., clean and in good decorative order. Similarly, the garden should be kept in a reasonable condition, with grass cut and the drives and paths kept free of moss and weeds, etc. Minor repairs, i.e., replacement of tap washers, chimney sweeping, etc., should be carried out by the occupant at his/her expense.

## Internal redecoration

The internal decorations of the parsonage house are the responsibility of the occupant. A grant of £100 per annum is available on production of receipts for either the purchase of decorating materials, or towards the cost of the occupant paying a tradesman to carry out the work.

## Garden

The maintenance of the garden is wholly the responsibility of the occupant with the exception of mature trees, which are the responsibility of the Parsonages Board. It should be noted that during a vacancy, if the house is not occupied by tenants, the responsibility for maintaining the garden lies with the Parochial Church Council at its expense.

## Cookers

The Diocesan Parsonages Board does not provide cookers and it is therefore the responsibility of the occupier to provide a cooker at his/her own expense. In the kitchen a cooker space, usually of a standard 600mm width, is provided, together with gas and electric cooker points. The Property Office will arrange to have the occupant's cooker connected by a competent tradesman free of charge to the occupant.

# Useful checklist of periodic inspection of the property by the occupant

## 1. Annually

- Clean out all gutters and rainwater pipes in the autumn.
- Clean uPVC window frames with mild detergent inside and outside.
- Check the trees in your garden for obvious defects in the spring and after any gales.
- Check the central heating header tank in the loft is full and the ball valve operates freely.
- Decorate one room.

## 2. At Least Twice Yearly

- Clean out extractor fans and replace filters where appropriate.
- Kill weeds and moss on driveways, paths and path edges.
- Oil all window stays and hinges to doors and windows as necessary.

## 3. Frequently

- Keep rainwater and kitchen gullies free from leaves, grease and debris.
- Check roofs for missing slates or tiles.
- Check for leaks on overflows, toilets, sinks, bath seal, washing machine, dishwasher, etc.
- Tighten loose screws on hinges, locks, latches, etc. before damage occurs.
- Check operation of smoke alarms and replace batteries if required.

# Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995

The parsonage house is primarily a private dwelling for the sole use of the incumbent and his/her family. Under the above Act of Parliament if an incumbent makes part of his/her house available for meetings he/she is deemed to be a “service provider” for the purpose of the Act.

The incumbent is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the premises to accommodate disabled people or, alternatively, cease to use the parsonage house for such meetings and use alternative more suitable premises. This duty is the incumbent’s alone and not shared with the Diocesan Parsonages Board.





If a parsonage house is occupied by a disabled person, the Parsonages Board will, wherever practicable, carry out the necessary alterations to the house. This work may include the provision of entrance ramps, widening of doorways, provision of grab rails, etc. Whenever new parsonage houses are designed and built, the special needs of the disabled will be considered and wherever possible incorporated at the design stage.

## Additional Residents

The parsonage house may, of course, be home to a close clergy family relative, for example, an aged parent. However, it is important to remember that no residents other than the office holder have occupancy rights. No arrangements for any form of sub-letting should be entered into and particular personal circumstances should be discussed with the relevant Archdeacon.

## Trading

Canon C28 prohibits holders of ecclesiastical office from engaging in trade or other occupations detrimental to their duties and the parsonage house should not be used for trade or other non-ecclesiastical purposes without the knowledge of and permission of the Bishop. This may apply to spouses and personal circumstances should be discussed with the relevant Archdeacon.

## On leaving the parsonage

Occupants are responsible for ensuring that the parsonage and garden are left clean and tidy as they leave the property. Any damage and excessive wear and tear will be a claim on the outgoing occupants.

## Arrangements during a vacancy

The Property Office should be informed by the outgoing occupant of the date when a parsonage house is to be vacated and of the arrangements which have been made for the custody of the keys during a vacancy. One set of keys **must** be deposited with the Property Office

*It is particularly important that gas, water and electricity meters are read and services are turned off (but not terminated) when the house is vacated. The meter readings together with the names of the utility providers should be forwarded to the Property Office by telephone or email on the day the house is vacated. If the house is to be unoccupied during the winter months, the pipes, tanks and central heating system should be drained. (This should be arranged through the Property Office). No insurance against water damage is effective when the house is vacant*



**N.B. IF A VACANT PARSONAGE HOUSE IS PROTECTED BY A SECURITY ALARM DO NOT SWITCH OFF THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY!**

The telephone service is the responsibility of the PCC/Incumbent and local arrangements should be made to maintain the service. During a vacancy, all costs relating to the telephone service are the responsibility of the PCC.

Should any advice be required about the care of the parsonage house during a vacancy reference should be made to the staff of the Property Office who will be pleased to assist. The PCC is asked to ensure that the garden is kept tidy and a regular inspection of the house maintained for security purposes.

Before an occupant vacates a house, a letter setting out any known problems, repairs required, etc., would be welcomed by the staff of the Property Office.

When a new incumbent is appointed to a benefice it is usual for the Diocesan Surveyor to meet at the parsonage house to discuss whether or not any ingoing works are necessary.

At an early stage of the vacancy, the Archdeacon together with the Property Office and Parochial Church Council representatives will consider the future of the house in relation to the needs of the ministry for the parish. If it is felt that the house should be disposed of the matter will be brought to the attention of the Parsonages Board, which will set a process in motion. The normal consultation with the Bishop, Patron and Parochial Church Council will then take place.

## Letting of vacant parsonage houses

During a vacancy, it is the policy of the Parsonages Board, wherever possible, to let parsonage houses to suitable tenants on six month assured shorthold tenancy agreements. This policy deters vandalism, keeps the property and garden adequately maintained and generates much needed rental income to offset the diocesan maintenance costs.

## Moving into a Parsonage House

Upon moving to a parsonage house, the new occupant should arrange to read the gas and electricity meters and forward these readings to the Property Office. The new occupant's contact details, ie, telephone number, mobile telephone number and email address should also be provided to the Property Office at the earliest opportunity.

## What to do in an emergency

If an emergency occurs during office hours, contact the Property Office and report the nature of the emergency. Its staff will organise repairs and offer appropriate advice. If an emergency occurs outside office hours, contact a local contractor and instruct them to carry out emergency repairs until more permanent arrangements can be made. A list of approved contractors appears at the end of this section who have offered to attend out of hours emergencies. You should then report the problem to the Property Office at the earliest opportunity.

You should note that contractors should only be called out in a genuine emergency. If you call out a contractor for repairs not considered an emergency, you may be liable to pay all the additional costs associated with the call out.

# Emergencies in the home

## Gas Leaks

If you smell gas take immediate action as follows:

- (i) Extinguish all naked flames, cigarettes, etc.
- (ii) Turn off all gas appliances.
- (iii) Turn off the gas supply at the meter.
- (iv) Contact your gas supplier or Transco 0800 111 999 (24 hours).
- (v) Do not use electrical appliances, light switches, etc. (
- (vi) Inform the Property Office as soon as possible.

## Fire

- (i) Evacuate the building immediately.
- (ii) Call the fire service immediately on 999.
- (iii) If possible and without putting yourself at risk, close all internal doors to prevent the fire spreading. Do not allow people to re-enter the building for any purpose.
- (iv) If possible, and without putting yourself at risk, switch off gas and electricity supplies.
- (v) You must inform the Property Office as soon as possible after any fire has occurred.

## Stopcocks

Locate the position of your main stopcocks providing cold water to the house and check regularly that they are operational.

## Burst Water Pipes

Turn off the water supply, turn off the central heating boiler controls and report the problem to the Property Office. You should be aware that extensive damage can result from burst pipes to both the structure of the house and your contents. If you go away for only a few days during winter, leave your central heating on and arrange for a responsible person to look after your house. If you are vacating the property permanently, please notify the Property Office of the date of your departure and the arrangements made for its protection during the vacancy.

## Burglary

Telephone the Police, do not enter the property alone – wait for the Police to arrive. Obtain Crime Number and Name and Police Station base of the Police Officer dealing with the incident. Secure the property and advise the Property Office as soon as possible.

## Intruder Alarms

The Parsonages Board provides intruder alarms to all houses. These are usually of the “audible only” type, but can be linked to monitoring stations if deemed essential. The alarm systems are maintained annually by WEC Alarms Ltd., who also provide 24 hour emergency assistance under a comprehensive maintenance agreement. This service is funded from the Parsonages Board budget

# Emergency telephone numbers

## Glazing and Temporary Securing of Premises

VMV Glazing Ltd

Tel: (0115) 986 7700 (24 hours)

## Intruder Alarms

WEC Alarms Ltd

Tel: (0115) 931 2656

## Electrical Work

NG5 Electrical Ltd

Tel: (0115) 9207533 or 07947 669003

P. J. Lilley Ltd

Tel: 0115 963 4230 (24 hours)

## Roof Repairs

P. J. Lilley Ltd

Tel: 0115 963 4230 (24 hours)

## Plumbing and Heating

Graham Stone Plumbers (Russell Stone)

Mobile: 07976 663483

Brand Tec Energy Services (Russell Brandreth)

Tel: (01623) 651488 Mobile: 07850 704893

Paul Derry

01636 702166 (24 hours)

P. J. Lilley Ltd.

Tel: 0115 963 4230 (24 hours)

### **Building Work**

P. J. Lilley Ltd Tel: 0115 963 4230

React Property Maintenance (Jamie Bowler)

Tel: 0115 967 4000 Mobile: 07891 114113

### **Drainage Services**

Turbo Drain (Nigel Harper)

Tel: (0115) 948 4172 Mobile: 07831 616197

### **Locksmith/Joiner**

A1 Locksmiths

Tel: 07977 432089 (24 hours)

### **Insurance Claims**

Ecclesiastical Insurance Office

Tel: 01452 872795

### **Policy Numbers:**

Parsonage Houses 07/HHP/9152037

Glebe & DBF Houses 07/HHP/9114841

## Insurance

All diocesan-owned houses are insured by the Southwell Diocesan Board of Finance under a block policy issued by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group. The premium is paid by the Southwell Diocesan Board of Finance from the Parsonages Board budget and no action is required by the parish or occupant.

It is a condition of the insurance that in the event of any damage to the house arising from vandalism or forced entry the Police must be informed. The insurers will require details of the damage, the time and date it occurred, the location of the Police Station to which it was reported and the Crime Number.

The insurance policy covers the structure of the building and its fixtures and fittings, but not the contents of the house belonging to the occupant, or parish. Therefore it is the occupant's responsibility to insure his/her own possessions and the parish should insure any equipment it owns but which is kept in the parsonage house, e.g., photocopiers, telephones, computers, etc.

If any part of the house is let or used on a regular basis for parish activities this must be reported to the Property Office, which will notify the Board's insurers. Any additional premium required for these activities will be the responsibility of either the occupant or the parish.

## In case of dispute

If occupants find themselves in a disagreement with the Property Office which cannot be resolved with the Property Officers, advice should be sought from the relevant Area Dean, Archdeacon or Chair of the Diocesan House of Clergy



# Notes

# How to Get in Touch

## Diocesan Property Office

### **Mr Ian Greaves**

Diocesan Surveyor  
All Housing Matters  
Tel: (01636) 817214  
email: [igreaves@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:igreaves@southwell.anglican.org)

### **Mrs Clare Hardy**

Property Administrator  
All Property Office  
General Enquiries/Routine Maintenance  
Tel: (01636) 817213  
email: [Clare.Hardy@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:Clare.Hardy@southwell.anglican.org)

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