

Diocesan Regulations & Guidelines 2026

These Regulations & Guidelines explain how to deal with Parochial Fees income for all Stipendiary Clergy and Self-Supporting Ministers with responsibility for a parish. It also covers payment of fees and expenses to Retired Clergy, Self-Supporting Ministers and Readers.

All Ministers licensed or permitted by the Bishop to officiate at services are required to adhere to these regulations for the pastoral and financial benefit of the diocesan family.

With reducing numbers of Stipendiary Clergy and in developing fresh patterns of shared ministry the Church relies heavily on Retired Clergy, Self-Supporting Ministers and Readers. Without their considerable and much appreciated help, it would be impossible to maintain the services and pastoral care needed in the parishes of our Diocese.

These 'Diocesan Regulations & Guidelines' are based on those produced by the Archbishops' Council. They promote good practice in ministry and a proper balance between the financial needs of the Church and the principle of the labourer being worthy of hire. **The Regulations & Guidance should be read in conjunction with the Archbishops' Council guide "A Guide to Church of England Parochial Fees" which you can read on the Church of England website** (<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/life-events-parochial-fees-and-guidance/guide-church>).

THE PCC ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR COLLECTING AND PASSING ON FEES AS APPROPRIATE. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE PCC TREASURER OR THE CHURCHWARDENS COLLECT THE FEES AND SEND THEM TO THE DBF ON BEHALF OF THE PCC USING THE RECORD OF PAROCHIAL FEES RETURN.

1. TABLE OF PAROCHIAL FEES

The annual Table of Parochial Fees published by the Archbishops' Council remains the statutory reference.

The first column of the table of parochial fees are payable to the **Diocesan Board of Finance**. The fees shown in the second column of the table of parochial fees are payable to the **Parochial Church Council**.

Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) fees

The DBF can direct either generally, or in particular cases, that any fee, or part of a fee which would otherwise be payable to it shall be payable to a Substitute Minister performing the service. An appendix to the Table of Parochial Fees, "**Highlighted Substitute Minister Fees Table**" has been produced to show how the "Fee Payable to the Diocesan Board of Finance" is to be apportioned between the Diocesan Board of Finance and Substitute Ministers.

Parochial Church Council (PCC) fees

These fees should be regarded as a contribution toward the cost of the general upkeep of the church and churchyard for which the council is responsible. The prescribed fees are not, however, intended to include any payment for "extras".

For more detail on what the statutory fees cover and payments for "extras" see (<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/life-events-parochial-fees-and-guidance/guide-church>).



2. RECORD OF PAROCHIAL FEES

The Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) requires the completion of a “Record of Parochial Fees Return” for all parishes (a sample of the record is attached to these guidelines as an appendix). You may send a return for a benefice or group of parishes, provided that details of individual parishes are provided.

A completed “Record of Parochial Fees Return” sheet, together with the requisite payment (cheques payable to “Southwell & Nottingham DBF” or by BACS transfer) should reach the diocesan office by the 15th day of the month following. To ensure that the Board of Finance has complete records for each parish **you are required to send a ‘nil return’ if you have no fee income**. Only the Statutory Fee due to PCCs should be accounted for by PCCs as ‘fees for weddings and funerals’.

Please note the following:

a) Team Ministries

There are a few Team Ministries where the established practice is to direct all fees from the benefice into a Team Account and then account for such fees to the Diocesan Board of Finance. We would prefer this method of accounting for fees in Teams.

b) Curates in training and Parochial Licensed Lay workers

Curates in training and Parochial Licensed Lay workers **do not retain any fees** relating either to the benefice to which they are licensed or to any other benefice. **Any fees should be passed to the relevant PCC Treasurer/Churchwarden.**

3. FEES DUE TO PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS

Such fees should go directly to PCCs.

4. EXPENSES

The expenses of Officiating Ministers **should be fully reimbursed by the PCC**. PCCs are to use HM Revenue & Customs mileage rates for Retired Clergy, Self-supporting Ministers (SSMs) and Readers (note also local agreements with undertakers). Please see the HM Revenue & Customs website for the latest rates or check with the diocesan Finance Office. Please note that travel expenses for all Casual Duty and Occasional Offices should be handled locally. These are NOT payable from the fees as described in the Table of Parochial Fees or Diocesan Table of Apportionment of Fees.

5. CONSENT REQUIRED

Where Retired Clergy with PtO, SSMs or Readers take Sunday/Weekday duty, Weddings or Funerals in church, the consent of the person who has the cure of souls will be required. During a vacancy the Area Dean and Churchwardens must consent.

6. CASUAL DUTY

A casual duty fee is payable by the PCC to Retired Clergy with Permission to Officiate and Self-supporting Ministers (except those who are Curates in training and House for Duty) for a Sunday or weekday service i.e. Holy Communion / a Service of the Word. A Casual Sunday / Weekday Duty Fee is only payable for a service in a parish other than the one where the Substitute Minister normally worships. However, a Casual Duty Fee should be offered when their ‘home parish’ is in vacancy or when the Incumbent/Priest in Charge is on sabbatical or is on long-term sickness leave (i.e. after a month of illness).

Normally, only one payment will be due if there are two similar services which follow each other (e.g. two morning services with same sermon or a shorter baptism service following a morning service), where little extra preparation is needed. However, if two morning services require very different preparation (e.g. one traditional eucharist followed by an all age or contemporary service then a two casual duty fees can be paid. No more than two casual duty fees will be paid to the same priest, at the same parish on the same day. In addition, expenses are payable by the PCC.

7. FEES TO RETIRED CLERGY with PtO, SELF-SUPPORTING MINISTERS & READERS (SUBSTITUTE MINISTERS)

Since 1st January 2014 Retired Clergy with Permission to Officiate, all licensed Self-Supporting Ministers (but not SSM curates in training – see 2b above) and licensed Readers (who have done training in taking funerals) will be eligible to claim two thirds of the statutory fee for weddings and funerals (as appropriate) as set out in the Diocesan Table of Apportionment of Fees.

Fees are payable as follows:

(a) An Occasional Office Fee for a wedding in church plus expenses, providing the appropriate 'preparation for marriage' before the service is undertaken.

(b) An Occasional Office Fee for a funeral in church, providing the appropriate pastoral visiting before and after the service is undertaken by the Substitute Minister.

Expenses payable should be dealt with as described in Regulation 4 above.

8. FEES FOR SERVICES IN A CREMATORIUM OR CEMETERY

Incumbents are encouraged to be proactive in developing and maintaining good relationships with local Funeral Directors. In particular clergy should make it clear to undertakers how and who to contact when they are unavailable, so that bereaved parishioners may remain in the care of the Church.

(a) Deceased's Incumbent takes the Service

The 'Deceased's Incumbent' is either the incumbent of the parish of usual residence prior to death, or the incumbent of the parish on whose electoral roll the deceased's name was entered. Fees are payable to the Diocesan Board of Finance.

b) Another Minister officiates at the request of the family of the deceased or with the consent of the Deceased's Incumbent

The fees are payable to the Diocesan Board of Finance but may in part be passed on to a Substitute Minister in accordance with Regulation 7 above.

(c) Another Minister officiates without the prior consent of the Deceased's Incumbent

No Minister should officiate without prior consent. Clergy should discourage Funeral Directors from making such arrangements because the Church not only loses fee income, but also misses out on pastoral care and evangelistic opportunities.

(d) When a Funeral Director asks a Retired Clergyperson, SSM or Reader to conduct a funeral

Under these Diocesan Regulations & Guidelines the Bishop asks that, in such circumstances, Ministers licensed by him inform the Deceased's Incumbent and abide by the fee entitlement indicated.



9. BLESSINGS OF MARRIAGE IN CHURCH FOLLOWING A CIVIL MARRIAGE CEREMONY

There is no prescribed fee, however in the light of Bishop's expectations that the couple be properly prepared for their marriage it will be good practice to invite the couple to make a payment comparable to the statutory marriage service fee.

10. PCC ADDITIONAL EXTRAS

For more detail on what the statutory fees cover and payments for "extras" please see the Archbishops' Council guide "A Guide to Church of England Parochial Fees" which is downloadable from the Fees page of the Church of England website under 'Resources' [Guide to Church of England Fees](#).

11. WHAT ABOUT TAX ON FEES?

All Substitute Ministers should continue to declare fees to HMRC. The DBF has received advice that no employment relationship exists as a result of these payments between the DBF and substitute ministers.

12. WHAT SHOULD WE DO IF WE ARE AWARE OF A PERSON CLAIMING TO CARRY OUT CHURCH OF ENGLAND SERVICES IN THE PARISH AND NOT REMITTING THE FEE?

The legislation makes it clear that the statutory fee belongs to the DBF. Such activity is strictly illegal. The matter should therefore be reported as soon as possible to the relevant Archdeacon for investigation.

13. DURING VACANCIES IN A BENEFICE

The PCC may pay Substitute Ministers fees and expenses for duty as allowed by these regulations, reclaiming them from the Board of Finance using the appropriate claim forms, available from the Finance Office and on the Diocesan website <https://southwell.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Sequestration-expenses-claim-form-Excel-2017-1.pdf>. Sequestration expenses claims should be sent directly to the Archdeacons' Office for processing.

Please note: parishes may not start to claim expenses for sequestration until either the date of the incumbent's official retirement or the date they are officially licensed to a new post or parish. It is important to recognise that this may not be the same date as their last Sunday service they take in their parish and fees should be accounted for in the usual way until such time.

Separate guidance notes are issued once a parish goes into vacancy.