



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury  
and Ipswich**

# Clergy Housing Handbook



October 2019

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## **The Aim of the Parsonage Committee**

To provide and maintain good quality cost effective housing to support clergy in their ministry.

## **The Purpose of this Booklet is to**

- Explain how the system of maintaining diocesan houses works.
- Set out the rights and duties of all involved.
- Explain the procedures in case of emergencies.
- Provide answers to many routine questions.

**If you become aware of any building maintenance or repair issues, then please report them as soon as possible to the diocesan office staff on 01473 298500 or via email to:**

**property@cofesuffolk.org**

## **Standard of Clergy Housing**

We aim to provide the most modern, cost efficient and comfortable accommodation possible within the constraints of location and budget. The standard of accommodation for clergy housing will usually provide:

- four bedrooms,
- a separate study,
- a ground floor cloakroom,
- first floor family bathroom, with separate WC,
- second shower room/bathroom or en suite,
- two reception rooms,
- kitchen, with separate utility space,
- a single-space garage, with separate off-road parking.

Sometimes it is simply not possible (or necessary) for all the criteria to be met and some flexibility may be required where exceptions to the basic standard cannot be avoided, for example:

- where special needs exist,
- where the location means that a property providing the standard accommodation is not readily available.

## **Responsibilities of the Parsonage Committee**

1. To maintain the structure and exterior of the building (walls, roofs, windows, doors, gutters, drains etc.).
2. To provide and maintain the installations for the supply of heating, water, utilities and sanitation.
3. To make payments in respect of council tax, water/sewerage rates and building insurance (but not contents insurance).
4. To maintain all fixtures and fittings belonging to the house listed on the latest periodic inspection report.
5. To decorate and maintain public rooms (the downstairs WC, the hall, stairs, landing and study) in neutral colours.
6. To have smoke and carbon dioxide detectors fitted in the premises.
7. To provide flooring for wet areas (kitchen, utility room, WCs and bathrooms) and studies, halls, stairs and landings.
8. To provide basic curtain track fittings to each window and to provide blinds to certain windows on a discretionary basis.
9. To supply shelving to studies.
10. To maintain integrated cookers and hobs.
11. To have the property inspected at intervals not exceeding five years and to provide the resident with a copy of the report.
12. To prioritise and carry out improvement work when and where appropriate and as funds permit.
13. To manage through the Periodic Inspection process (and as required in the intervening period), any large trees at the property (excluding modest fruit trees, hedges and shrubs).
14. The Property Committee currently arranges a bi-annual Planned Preventative Maintenance Scheme (PPMS), for all rainwater goods and drainage systems.
15. To provide a BT point in the study.
16. To maintain boundary fences and hedges.

## **Responsibilities of the Resident**

1. To report any repairs and maintenance issues – refer to “What to do” section.
2. To implement and pay for any repairs made necessary by misuse, neglect or damage, including damage caused by animals. This may include any costs incurred for drain clearance, e.g. where blockages have been caused by fat deposits or toilet wipes.
3. To maintain internal decoration in good order. Non-public rooms may be painted in a colour of choice yet décor must be returned to a neutral colour at the cost of the resident prior to vacating the premises. Public rooms (the downstairs WC, the hall, stairs, landing and study) are decorated and maintained by the diocese in neutral colours although other colours may be permitted at the discretion of the relevant archdeacon and the Head of Property.
4. To provide and replace all floor coverings as required excepting the wet areas, study, hall, stairs and landing, which will be provided with vinyl floor covering and carpet respectively. Woodblock flooring will be subject to occasional major refurbishment but the general sanding, staining and polishing of these surfaces is the responsibility of the resident.
5. To provide and repair any appliances (the Property Committee will endeavour to provide standard 600mm spaces for typical appliances).
6. To maintain all garden areas including hedge trimming, pruning of fruit trees, shrubs, grass cutting, beds & borders and keeping driveways and paths free of weeds. Please refer also to the safety section. Failure to maintain the garden in reasonable order may result in the relevant archdeacon appointing a gardener to do so at the incumbent’s expense.
7. To provide any fencing required to keep pets within bounds.
8. To make arrangement for the installation and maintenance of all radio or TV aerials and satellite dishes and ensure that they conform to local planning constraints.
9. To ensure adequate home contents insurance – strongly recommended. All personal belongings are the responsibility of the resident.
10. To advise the diocesan office staff if the property is to be unoccupied for more than 28 days.
11. To report immediately to the diocesan office staff any problems that may lead to structural damage if left unattended or any damage that may be subject to an insurance claim.
12. To keep pre-arranged appointments with contractors and to give access to the Diocesan Surveyor.
13. To inform the diocesan office staff of work not carried out within a reasonable timeframe.
14. To seek consent from the diocesan office staff for any cat or dog flaps and to meet the costs of installation and reinstatement when vacating the property.
15. To pay for any installation, rental or maintenance costs associated with the telephone service regarding personal phonelines.
16. To make arrangement for chimneys and for wood-burners in use to be regularly swept or inspected (HETAS recommends one or twice a year depending on usage).
17. To report immediately to the diocesan office staff any notices or letters received from statutory bodies such as Local Authorities, HM Land Registry or Historic England. This is particularly important where notice is received of a nearby planning application.
18. To note that no part of the premises may be used for any purpose other than as a domestic dwelling. The use of the premises for commercial business use is strictly prohibited.
19. The property may not be altered in any way without the consent of the Property Committee. Work organised at the occupier’s cost and under the supervision of the Diocesan Surveyor may be permissible.
20. To provide and maintain any garden sheds that do not form a part of the structure of the house.
21. To arrange and pay for brown bins if required.

22. When moving from the property, to clear all personal belongings from the house, loft, outbuildings, garage and garden – any costs incurred for removal may be recharged to the resident.

## **Responsibilities of the Diocesan Surveyor**

- To monitor and supervise maintenance and improvement work where necessary.
- To manage letting of properties where there is a vacancy.
- To provide advice as required for purchases and sales.
- To complete a periodic inspection of each property, at a time arranged with the resident, at intervals not exceeding five years.

## **The Periodic Inspection Process**

- The Diocesan Surveyor, by prior arrangement with the resident will inspect the property at intervals not exceeding five years.
- These inspections are generally carried out in the autumn.
- Following the inspection, the Diocesan Surveyor will produce a comprehensive report giving answers to certain questions (as required by the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972), and a schedule of repairs.
- A copy of the report is sent to the resident together with a notice stating his/her right to make representations and the date by which the representations must be made.
- The Diocesan Surveyor will arrange for contractors to visit the property to obtain competitive tenders for the repairs and any external decoration recommended.
- The reports and representations are then considered at the next available meeting of the Parsonage Committee.
- Any recommended improvement will be added to the list of outstanding improvements. These are prioritised and are addressed from time to time and as funds allow. Some improvements are, more logically, carried out during an interregnum.
- So long as the total cost of the repair works is within the budget allocation, the Property Committee will instruct the Diocesan Surveyor to place orders for the work External works, particularly redecoration, will generally be carried out during the summer following the inspection.
- The Diocesan Surveyor will oversee the work, dealing with all queries and contract instructions, including following satisfactory completion of the work, authorising payment of the contractor's final account.
- All periodic inspection work should be completed by the end of October in the year following the inspection.

## **What to do About Repairs**

**If you become aware of any building maintenance or repair issues, then please report them as soon as possible to the diocesan office staff on 01473 298500 or via email to:  
[property@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:property@cofesuffolk.org)**

## **In an emergency**

### **1. In diocesan office hours:**

Contact the diocesan office switchboard 01473 298500

### **2. Outside office hours:**

Instruct a local contractor to carry out sufficient work to resolve the emergency. Report the repair, together with its cost to the diocesan office staff as early as possible. (N.B. interim emergency arrangements are organised during statutory holiday periods such as Christmas and Easter and you will be advised accordingly).

### **3. De Minimis:**

Emergency works of up to £300 may be undertaken without the prior consent of the diocesan office staff or relevant archdeacon. The resident should inform the contractor/s that invoices must be made out to the Diocesan Board of Finance and sent to the Diocesan Office.

## **Safety and Security**

### **Gas**

Annual safety checks on central heating boilers and other gas appliances are arranged by the diocesan office staff to comply with the Gas Safety Regulations. Prior authorisation must be obtained before any alternative arrangements are made.

### **Oil**

Annual safety checks on central heating boilers are arranged by the diocesan office staff to comply with the OFTEC recommendations.

### **Electricity**

Periodic Testing is organised by the diocesan office staff and undertaken in accordance with current recommendations. Prior written approval must be obtained for any alterations or adaptation of fixed wiring electrical installations or equipment. Occupiers are responsible for their own appliances.

### **Trees**

Many trees are subject to Local Authority protection. Therefore, no work (annual pruning excepted) is to be carried out without consultation with diocesan office staff. Please inform the diocesan office if you have any concerns regarding the trees in your garden.

### **Smoke Detectors**

At least two will normally be provided. Residents should test the alarms weekly and report any faults to the diocesan office.

### **Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

At least one will normally be provided. Residents should test the alarms weekly and report any faults to the diocesan office.

### **Asbestos**

To ensure the safety of our occupiers and contractors, and in accordance with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (2002), the Property Committee has undertaken a survey for the presence of asbestos at all homes. A copy of the report should be available at the property for inspection by residents and visiting contractors. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the report, and report any disturbance of asbestos containing materials (ACMs) to the diocesan office staff immediately.

## **Condensation**

Condensation is a problem which has become more prevalent since standards for modern construction have changed. When warm moist air, produced naturally through daily living comes into contact with cold surfaces, water droplets within the air will condense on the cold surfaces such as windows and cold areas of wall. In due course, prolonged moisture build-up may result in mould growth or timber rot.

Installation of replacement double-glazing, draft exclusion, closure of chimneys and replacement doors are all factors which are likely to reduce natural ventilation within a property. The consequence of this is that warm moist air is unable to escape to the open air. The Property Committee aims to reduce issues of condensation through providing extractor fans to kitchens and bathrooms

Residents can play their part in reducing condensation by ensuring that:

- a) washing is not dried within the house,
- b) extractor fans are used where possible,
- c) the property is kept adequately warm,
- d) the property is ventilated through opening windows and doors as moisture is produced.

## **Disability**

The parsonage house is considered a domestic dwelling with public access by invitation. Where practical, assistance in providing improved access will be considered.

## **Water Softeners**

These are not provided but where they are fitted, the resident is responsible for maintenance.

## **Security**

Suffolk is generally regarded as one of the safest counties within which to reside. Some houses have limited security devices (alarms, external lighting etc.). These are not generally provided by the Property Committee but where they exist, maintenance and servicing is the responsibility of the resident.

## **Moving House**

As far as possible, the Parsonage Committee and archdeacons will ensure that houses are in good condition and ready to receive new residents. Repairs will usually have been completed where necessary, although it should be noted that most external repairs and maintenance works are completed following periodic inspections and not at the time of vacancies. Where the Parsonage Committee has agreed, improvement works will have been completed prior to the property being re-occupied but subject to available budget provision. It is hoped that the internal decorative order has been left in an acceptable standard by previous occupants. There will normally be an opportunity for incoming clergy to view the house and meet with the diocesan surveyor and archdeacon prior to the move. The parsonage department will arrange for a removal company to survey your current home and will liaise with you regarding your moving date. Removal fees will usually be met by the diocese.

## **When moving in**

1. Arrange for the supply of gas and electricity service accounts to be transferred into your name. The diocesan office staff can usually provide the current suppliers' details.
2. It is recommended that the telephone service is in the name of the PCC and arrangements made for private use.

3. Ensure that the correct amount of Council Tax and other charges are levied by informing the diocesan office of the moving dates and the number of adults living in the house (NB: there is a discount for a single person).
4. Where the boiler is oil-fired, establish whether a top-up is required in advance of your move.
5. Ensure that your cooker will connect to the electricity or gas supply at the property.
6. Consider the access arrangements at your current property and alert the removal firm to any concerns regarding access.

### **When moving out**

When moving out you will receive a letter from the Archdeacons' PA several weeks in advance of your move, detailing the arrangements which should be made. This will include a form to fill in, covering amongst other things: scheduled moving date; utility supplies; heating system; telephone service; keys; security; house contents, garden and the condition of the property. Please feel free to contact staff at the diocesan office if you have any queries.

### **You are required to vacate a provided house within one month of the termination of your office.**

Please ensure that **all** personal possessions are removed and leave the house, loft and outbuildings in a clean condition ready for a new occupier and as you would expect to find them.

We will arrange to carry out an inspection within the last 2 months to help with any concerns you may have with the move and to discuss any works required to the house before you leave. As this is a busy time for you there are a number of services which we can assist with on a chargeable basis –

• Rubbish removal from house/garden including skip hire	£300
• Cleaning inside of house including inside of kitchen cupboards	£200
• Carpet cleaning (any number of carpets)	£100
• Grass cutting	£100
• Redecoration (per room) to neutral colour	£300
• Replacement of lost keys (per set)	£ 55

If you wish to use the above service please contact [property@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:property@cofesuffolk.org) or discuss with the Diocesan Surveyor/Archdeacon during the moving out property inspection.

### **Letting of vacant properties**

Clergy houses usually fall vacant only in a vacancy or pending pastoral reorganisation and/or the sale of the house. The primary consideration of the Parsonage Committee is to support ministry through the provision of good houses. This may mean that on occasions the house is kept empty for a short period pending an appointment of a new minister. However, in most cases vacancies will last at least six months and the principles of good stewardship have led the Parsonage Committee to adopt a policy of letting vacant clergy houses. This approach offers many benefits including deterring vandalism, keeping the house properly maintained, avoiding adverse comment on leaving houses empty and generating rental income. Income from rental receipts are used to improve income at diocesan level and in turn are used to keep parish share as low as possible.

For further information regarding responsibilities during interregna, please refer to the Archidiaconal Handbook *A Guide to Parish Vacancies and Appointments*. A copy of this handbook is available to download on the diocesan website ([www.cofesuffolk.org](http://www.cofesuffolk.org)).

## **Useful names and addresses**

### **Archdeacon of Sudbury**

The Ven. Dr David Jenkins  
Sudbury Lodge  
Stanningfield Road  
Great Whelnetham  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP30 0TL

Tel: 01284 386942

[archdeacon.david@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:archdeacon.david@cofesuffolk.org)

### **Archdeacon of Ipswich**

The Ven. Rhiannon King  
c/o The Diocesan Office  
St Nicholas Centre  
4 Cutler Street  
Ipswich  
IP1 1UQ

Tel: 07595 880584

[archdeacon.rhiannon@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:archdeacon.rhiannon@cofesuffolk.org)

### **Diocesan Secretary**

Mrs Anna Hughes  
The Diocesan Office  
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4 Cutler Street  
Ipswich  
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[anna.hughes@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:anna.hughes@cofesuffolk.org)

### **Acting Archdeacon of Suffolk**

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[jeanette.gosney@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:jeanette.gosney@cofesuffolk.org)

### **Chairman of the Property Committee**

Mr Ian Wigston  
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4 Cutler Street  
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### **Head of Property and Diocesan Surveyor**

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