



DIOCESE OF COVENTRY

Clergy Housing Guide

For Occupants of Parsonages and other Diocesan Owned Properties

Ratified by the Parsonages Committee, March 2019 (updated July 2020)

FOREWORD

Welcome to the Diocese of Coventry. This guide has been updated and ratified by the Parsonages Committee and contains information and advice so that you and your family can enjoy your clergy home. Please keep it in a handy place!

Our aim is to use the housing budget fairly, equitably and wisely to provide a good standard of accommodation.

Upkeep of the property is a shared responsibility between the Diocese, clergy family and parish (please see Page 15 for a quick overview of who is responsible for what). The Diocese takes the lion's share of responsibility and maintains the structure and fabric of the building and the services to it. This includes such things as general repairs and maintenance, improvement works, payment of council tax, water rates and buildings insurance, etc. The occupant has a duty to take care of the house and gardens and to act as a good steward for the duration of their tenure and the parish plays an important role during vacancy and leading up to the arrival of the new clergy occupant.

If you have any concerns about your clergy home please get in touch with the property team who will be glad to do what they can to help.

Canon Ian Francis, OBE.
(Former) Chair of Coventry Parsonages Committee

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MEET THE TEAM

PROPERTY DEPARTMENT: The Property Department is a shared resource with the Diocese of Leicester. The property office is based at St Martins House, No.7 Peacock Lane, Leicester, LE1 5PZ. Office Hours are 9.00am – 5.00pm Mondays to Fridays. In the case of an **emergency** please refer to: www.dioceseofcoventry.org/property/property_emergency

Property Manager

Mr Peter Fowles (Peter.Fowles@Coventry.Anglican.org)

Telephone: 07958 623132

Peter's role is to oversee the efficient management of the property portfolio. Please contact Peter should you wish to discuss strategic or general housing matters.

Clergy Housing Officer

Mrs Dinta Chauhan (dinta.chauhan@covlec.org)

Telephone: 0116 261 5316

Dinta is the first point of contact for day to day maintenance and repairs

Property Officer

Miss Lesley Whitwell (lesley.whitwell@covlec.org)

Telephone: 0116 261 5315

Lesley provides admin and project management support related to housing, lets, council tax & pastoral schemes.

Diocesan Surveyor

Martin Stallard of YMD Boon Ltd (MStallard@ymdboon.co.uk)

Telephone: 01858 464482

Martin is an external resource and assists the Property Department in managing the housing stock and oversees quinquennial & interregnum work and improvements.

MOVING IN

Welcome! Once your appointment has been announced, please contact the churchwarden(s) to arrange to see the house again should you wish to do so.

Necessary internal works will be carried out prior to your arrival. External works may have been deferred to coincide with the quinquennial if it is due.

Please contact the Property Manager to discuss property matters and to confirm your move date.

Leading up to your move, or once you have moved in, please take meter readings, notify Dinta (include photographs if possible), and arrange for the utilities (gas, electricity & telephone/broadband) to be transferred to your name. If there is an oil-fired boiler then you should check to see if you need to arrange a delivery of oil.

Please contact the property department who will arrange for a suitably qualified contractor to connect/disconnect your gas or electric cooker.

The Diocese is responsible for Council Tax and Water Rates. Any communication regarding these should be forwarded to the Property Department. Please remember to notify the Property Department of any changes in circumstance which may affect the level of Council Tax i.e. single occupancy, disability etc.

The Diocese arranges buildings insurance cover but you are responsible for any contents insurance.

Do not forget to transfer/pay up your Television Licence.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

The Property Department is available during working hours (9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday) to give advice on the maintenance and upkeep of your home. For out of hours assistance you may contact: -

Plumbing and Heating: SMS 07699 780287. Leave your name/address and details of fault and SMS will call you back.

General Building: Derek Lloyd 07810 632142

Electrical: Mick Bozinovic 07973 521965

Drainage: Harborough Drainage 01858 468084

Trees: Longfield Tree & Hedge Care (Tom Bale) 07710 451375

Diocesan Surveyor: Martin Stallard 07734 980368

Emergency Plumbing Issues:

If you think you have frozen pipes then follow the guidance on the Severn Trent website:

<https://www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/faqs/what-do-i-do-if-i-think-my-pipes-are-frozen/>. Burst Pipes: Turn off the stop tap and open all cold water taps.

In the case of a fire:

Get everyone out of the building and stay out. If possible, close all doors and windows behind you to delay fire spreading. Dial the Fire Service immediately on 999.

If you need to open a closed door, check to see whether it feels hot first. If it does, there may be fire behind it, so don't open.

Plan a Fire Escape Route:

Plan what you would do if there were a fire in your home and always keep the escape routes clear.

Make sure everyone in your home is familiar with the escape plan.

If the main exit from your home locks with a key make sure the key is always easily accessible and everyone in your household knows where it's kept.

You can find more detailed advice on the Fire Service website: <https://www.fireservice.co.uk/>

In the case of a gas leak:

If you significantly smell gas, turn off the gas lever at the mains (next to the gas meter) by pulling the lever down.

Do not operate electrical switches – on or off - as a spark could ignite the gas.
Immediately, put out any naked flames and cigarettes and open windows and doors.
Ring the local gas emergency telephone number: 0800 111 999.
You can find more detailed gas advice on the following website: <http://www.nationalgridgas.com/safety-and-emergencies>

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

ASBESTOS: An asbestos survey has been carried out on your home (if built pre-2000). A copy of the report is held by the Property Department and the Diocesan Surveyors, YMD Boon Ltd. Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) in good condition or undisturbed are not hazardous to health. The condition of all suspect materials will be monitored. You should not undertake any repairs to the fabric of your house without first notifying the property department and referring to the asbestos report.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS: Your property should be fitted with at least one carbon monoxide detector. If this is not the case, please notify the Property Department who will reimburse you for the purchase of up to two 10year long life detectors. Please test the detectors weekly.

COVID-19: We have procedures issued to all our contractors to ensure they are adopting best practice to minimize the risk of Covid-19 infection spread. We have a document for what you should expect from a visiting contractor and how you can prepare. If you do not have a copy, please ask the property department or access the Diocesan website.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKS: Electrical tests are carried out by NICEIC qualified contractors as part of the Quinquennial work. No electrical work should be carried out unless commissioned by the Property Department. Please report electrical concerns immediately.

GAS/OIL BOILER & GAS SAFETY INSPECTIONS: Annual safety checks and servicing are arranged by the Property Department. SMS Heating Ltd are the appointed contractors and will contact you to agree a convenient time to visit. Please ensure you respond to their request for access. Any problems with your boiler or fire between services should be reported to the Property Department.

PONDS: Occupants are discouraged from creating ornamental ponds in gardens. If a pond already exists the Property Department will arrange to have it filled in upon request. Should you choose to retain a pond then you will be responsible for its maintenance and safety.

SMOKE DETECTORS: Your property should be fitted with two smoke detectors – one on each floor of the house. These are either battery operated or hard wired. The Property Department is responsible for any necessary replacement and repair but regular checking/testing and battery maintenance is the responsibility of the occupant. Please test the detectors weekly.

TREES: Large trees are the responsibility of the Property Department and are managed as part of the Quinquennial work program. Occupiers are requested to monitor trees in the garden and to report any concerns to the Property Department. Ornamental trees, fruit trees, hedges and shrubs are the responsibility of occupants and should be pruned as part of regular garden maintenance. Some trees are subject to a local Tree Preservation Order which means that they may not be pruned or cut down without permission; all trees in a Conservation Area are protected.

A – Z OF PROPERTY POLICIES

Alterations: Alterations to the house require the consent of the Property Department beforehand.

Bathrooms: Bathrooms will be replaced when they may be more sensibly replaced than repaired.

Mirror: Provided in family bathroom.

Shaver Point: One point is provided as standard.

Shower: A shower (usually Mira Sport electric) is provided. Consideration would be given to the provision of a separate shower cubicle if a shower over an existing bath was impractical.

Shower Curtain: A rail is provided where it is not possible to provide a shower screen. Shower curtains are the responsibility of the occupant.

Toilet Roll Holders & Towel Rails: Provided as standard.

Bats: Bats are a protected species. If you discover them at your property, please notify the Property Department without delay.

Boundaries: There should be no encroachment onto or from the property. Any boundary queries should be referred to the Property Department.

Fences: The DBF will provide secure boundary fencing to all vicarages. Where a public right of way runs through a clergy property it will be securely fenced off to prevent members of the public straying into the garden. Fencing

is not provided for pet enclosure.

The maintenance and repair of fences is the responsibility of the Property Department unless the boundary belongs to a neighbouring property. Occupants are not to plant trees and shrubs in such a position that they are likely to damage fences or obstruct access and self-set bushes and ivy should be removed before they become established.

Hedges: These are the responsibility of the occupant. The Property Department may consider undertaking work on tall beech or coniferous hedges but occupants are expected to trim all hedges on a regular basis to avoid the need for costly work.

Burglaries: Should you be unfortunate enough to experience a burglary, these are the steps to follow:

- Notify the police immediately and get a crime number.
- Contact the Property Department on 0116 261 5316.
- Notify the Archdeacon.
- Contact your contents insurance provider.
- If it is outside office hours then you may take reasonable steps to instruct urgent repairs and send the invoice to the Property Department for reimbursement.

Carpets: Carpets are occupant responsibility. If there is a trip hazard, particularly on the stairs then the diocese may meet the cost of repair or replacement (this would not extend to the landing and hall). Vinyl or similar floor covering is provided in the kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, bathroom and WC.

Central Heating: Gas or oil central heating is provided as standard and servicing and maintenance falls to the Diocese. The occupant is responsible for ensuring that:

- radiators are bled of air periodically.
- the boiler is not switched off during cold months.
- the oil supply does not get too low or run out.

Chimneys: Sweeping solid fuel use chimneys and removing obstructions such as birds' nests is the responsibility of

the occupant and should be undertaken annually. Chimney cowls are fitted as standard.

Condensation & Mould: Condensation occurs when warm moist air comes into contact with a cold surface and left unnoticed can form mould growth. The direct cause of condensation can be a combination of a low air temperature, high humidity and poor ventilation. Always keep the house well ventilated, particularly kitchens and bathrooms and, if condensation mould does occur, ventilate the room and clean off the mould with a fungicidal wash or a bleach solution. Bathrooms should have a working forced extract vent, activated with the use of the lights or shower.

Conservatories: The Property Department does not install conservatories. Where there is one in existence, then it will be maintained unless the surveyor recommends its removal.

Cookers: The provision of a cooker, whether free standing or built in, is the responsibility of the occupant including its maintenance and repair. If a vicar decides to change his cooker then it must be installed by an approved contractor. If this proves difficult then please contact the property department for advice to arrange for a suitably qualified contractor to connect/disconnect your gas or electric cooker. If a built-in oven or hob breaks down, the Property Department will arrange to remove it and re-configure the space for a standard 600mm free standing appliance.

Cracks: Cracks in plaster are often due to shrinkage and should be dealt with as part of the internal redecoration. Cracks which appear to be structural (e.g. in brick or stonework, usually appearing on both the inner and outer faces of the wall) may be due to subsidence and should be reported to the Property Department without delay.

Curtains and Blinds: These are occupant responsibility.

Curtain Tracks: Standard 'Swish' type tracks are provided.

Day-to-Day Repairs: Occupants are expected to carry out minor (non-electrical) repairs costing less than £100 at their own expense provided that they feel competent to do so. For all other repairs, please contact the Property Department.

Decorations (external): The Property Department will organize external decorations as part of the Quinquennial program.

Decorations (internal): If required, the Property Department will decorate in neutral colours the Hall, Stairs and Landing at the start of the occupancy. Occupants may carry out internal decoration as required/desired. PCCs are encouraged to contribute to the cost of those parts of the house which could be considered 'public', i.e. study and downstairs cloakroom.

Dishwashers: Plumbing connections for dishwashers will be provided as standard.

Door Bells & Knockers: The Property Department will provide either a door bell or a door knocker. Bell batteries are occupant responsibility.

Drains: Please: -

- avoid pouring fatty substances down the sink.
- do not flush items down the lavatory that can cause a blockage.
- do not pour forbidden substances into the drains that could enter water courses, e.g. oil or paint.
- keep clear of debris, leaves and silt.
- in the event of a blockage contact the Property Department.

Drives and Paths: Drives and pathways will be inspected during the Quinquennial inspection and any necessary repairs carried out. Occupants are requested to help control costs by keeping drives and paths free from weeds.

Dustbins: All bins (refuse, recycling & garden waste), and costs associated with them, are the responsibility of the occupant.

Extractors and Cooker Hoods: Extractor fans are provided in kitchens and some bathrooms and require regular cleaning by the user to keep them working effectively. Please notify the Property Department if faulty.

Garages/Parking: A house will normally have a garage but not always. The Diocese is not obliged to provide parking for second cars, caravans, boats etc.

Gardens: Occupants are responsible for routine garden maintenance and are expected to keep their gardens in good order. This includes the maintenance of hedges, pruning of fruit trees and similar work.

Ivy: Removal of long standing ivy growth from boundary walls can de-stabilise them leading to costly repairs. Guidance should be sought from the Property Department or at the Quinquennial Inspection before undertaking such work. Please do not plant or set ivy to grow up buildings or walls, it can be very destructive.

Japanese Knotweed: This plant is extremely invasive and can cause serious damage to buildings. Please notify the Property Department if you spot it growing in the garden or vicinity.

Garden Sheds & Greenhouses: Occupant responsibility.

Gutters: Repairs and maintenance are the responsibility of the Property Department.

Improvements: Improvements are noted during Quinquennial and Interregnum Inspections and added to a waiting list to be carried out on a priority basis. Requests for improvements from occupants can be considered for inclusion onto the list. If an occupant has pastoral reasons for a particular improvement to be prioritised they should contact the Archdeacon.

Infestation: Occupants should take measures to avoid anything that would attract vermin. Infestation by mice, rats, wasps, flies or other pests should be reported to the Property Department immediately.

Insulation: Cavity wall insulation is considered in properties where the construction permits. Loft insulation and lagging are provided as standard.

Locks (Door): A 5-lever external lock is provided as standard to the front door.

Locks (Window): Locks to easily accessible windows may be provided as necessary.

Lofts: Items may be stored in the loft where flooring is provided but it is important that the loft is not overloaded and that weight is spread as evenly as possible. A loft ladder and light will be provided as standard.

Parish Office/Meeting Rooms: The property must **not** be used as a parish office or meeting room.

Pets: Pets may be kept in the house or garden but occupants are expected to exercise common sense in their choice of animals with particular regard for the maintenance of the property and relations with neighbours. The Property Department is not responsible for provision of additional fencing for pet enclosure nor does it provide cat/dog flaps.

Planning Applications: Please advise the Property Department of any planning applications that are submitted concerning neighbouring properties.

Quinquennial Inspections: The Diocesan Surveyor will inspect the property every five years and schedule a program of repairs and external decoration. A copy of the Quinquennial Report is sent to occupiers who may make representations to the Property Department if they consider the schedule does not cover all necessary work. Repairs will be carried out in line with the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure; improvements will be subject to Parsonages Committee procedures.

However, if there are repairs you considered important, please let us know straight away so we can prioritise them.

Rights of Way: Occupants are asked to ensure that members of the public are not able to walk or drive across their gardens regularly other than using the main route to the front door. Long term use may establish rights by prescription.

Security Alarms/Lighting: Security Alarms are not provided as standard. However, if an alarm is already installed then annual maintenance/servicing and repairs are the responsibility of the parish. Security lighting is provided as standard and replacement of bulbs is the responsibility of the occupant.

Septic Tanks: Occupants are responsible for arranging the emptying of septic tanks; the invoices should be sent to the Property Department for payment.

Shelving: Study shelving to a maximum of 30m or according to the size and shape of the study is provided as standard. Occupants may add shelving at their own expense but should take care not to damage the building fabric. If additional shelving is added and is removed on departure, the occupant must make good any damage.

Sub-Letting: Sub-letting any part of the property is not permitted.

Telephone Points: A telephone point is provided in the study with a second point for family use elsewhere – extension/ additional lines may be fitted at the occupants' expense. Telephone and broadband are the responsibility of the occupant.

Television Aerials and Satellite Dishes: Occupant responsibility.

Washing Machines: Plumbing for washing machines is provided as standard.

Washing Line/Rotary: Occupant responsibility.

Woodblock Flooring: Sanding, polishing and staining wood floors are the responsibility of the occupant.

Wood Burners and Additional Gas Heaters: With General Synod's commitment for the Church of England to be Net Zero by 2030, wood burners and gas fires are discouraged.

QUICK OVERVIEW OF WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT

Diocese	Clergy Occupant
General repairs and maintenance	Minor repairs (up to £100)
Interregnum/Quinquennial Inspections and subsequent works	Organising gutter clearance (cost reimbursed by Property Department)
Cooker Installation/Removal only	Provision of cooker and maintenance/service
Annual gas/oil servicing and subsequent works	Annual sweeping of chimneys
5 yearly electrical safety checks	
Improvement works	Provision of appliances, shower curtain, rotary lines
Security alarm replacements	
Reimbursement of smoke/carbon monoxide detectors	Supply of smoke/carbon monoxide detectors (cost to be reimbursed)
Telephone points x 2	Broadband/cable/TV aerials
Major tree works	Gardening, pruning and patio cleaning
Provision and repair of boundary fences	Pet proofing the garden
External decoration 5 yearly Hall, stairs & landing during vacancy (if required)	Cleaning & internal decorating
Water resistant flooring to kitchen, utility, bathroom, WC	Carpeting throughout
Payment of council tax, water rates & buildings insurance	Payment for gas, electricity, oil usage & contents insurance

Parish
Care for the house & garden during vacancy
Paying for the telephone line rental charges during a vacancy if the number is to be retained
Cleaning the house/tidying the garden for the arrival of the new clergy family
Security alarm maintenance
Decorating public areas i.e. entrance porch, study & WC

MOVING OUT

So long, farewell! Once you know you are leaving then please notify the Property Department who will send Guidelines on vacating clergy property. Costs incurred by the diocese to redecorate or repair/replace floor covering, other than fair wear and tear, will be recharged to the occupant.

Please leave the house clean and completely empty (including garages and outhouses), and remove PCC/parish related items such as photocopiers, files etc.

Heating: during colder months please leave the heating set continually at 15°C and open the loft hatch to circulate warm air in the roof space. If the system is oil fired then please tell the Property Department if the oil supply is low.

Cookers: Please contact the property department who will arrange for a suitably qualified contractor to connect/disconnect your gas or electric cooker.

Telephone: Please ask the parish if the telephone number is to be retained. Line costs and other telephone charges during a vacancy fall to the parish.

Utilities: Notify gas and electricity providers of the final meter readings and let the Property Department have a copy of the readings and the providers' details. Please also ask the utility companies to address correspondence to: Coventry DBF, The Property Department, St Martins House, 7 Peacock Lane, Leicester LE1 5PZ.

Redirecting the post: Occupants are responsible for arranging the re-direction of mail with the Post Office and ensuring the parish set up re-directions for any parish mail that comes to the vicarage on a regular basis. Should mail be delivered when the property is vacant it should be collected by a Churchwarden or parish representative and, if appropriate, sent to the Property Department.

Contents: Built in appliances, log burners, shelving and any flooring provided by the Diocese should not be removed from the property.

Securing the house: On the day of departure please ensure that the house is secure (please do not lock internal doors) and hand over keys to the churchwarden(s) with the alarm code.