



PROPERTY TEAM

GUIDELINES FOR OCCUPANTS OF PARSONAGES AND OTHER DIOCESAN PROPERTIES

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INTRODUCTION

The following information is intended to inform and assist Clergy and lay people living in Parsonages and other properties in the Diocese of Blackburn.

It is not intended to be comprehensive as the Property Committee is continually reviewing policy, and individual situations may sometimes require special consideration. Please refer to website for latest version of this document.

The stewardship of housing is a partnership between the occupant, the Property Committee and the Parish.

The Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) Property Team at Church House is always happy to answer questions about the care and upkeep of these properties. Please feel free to contact:-

Michael Kellett **Diocesan Surveyor – 07384 544228**

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Sharon Anderson **Property Advisor – 01254 503079**

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Clayton House
Walker Office Park
Blackburn
BB1 2QE

In an emergency and after office hours contact can be made with officers via mobile telephones.

Michael Kellett 0738 454 4228 Preferred contact

Sharon Anderson 0777 850 3141 Preferred contact

If you call the Property Office after 4.00pm please do not leave a voice mail message, in case the office is temporarily unstaffed. In these circumstances please contact the out of hours numbers. In addition, if you have left a message about an emergency repair and have not received a call back from the Property Team by 4.00pm, please call one of the out of hours numbers to ensure your message has been received and is being dealt with.

The Chairman of the Property Committee can be contacted in the unlikely event that the above-named members of staff cannot be reached.

Canon Andrew Sage 01253 351 484

This section of the document sets out the terms on which, subject to the general provisions of the law, you will occupy your home, whether as a freeholder or under a license agreement. The remainder of these guidelines are written to help you understand the context and framework within which these rights and the Diocesan Policy and objectives are framed.

Your Rights & Duties

If you are a Freeholder you have certain rights and duties in respect of the Parsonage house and the land on which it stands. Some of these are set out in the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 which includes the following general statement: *'The incumbent shall have a duty to take proper care of a Parsonage house, being a duty equivalent to that of a tenant to use premises in a tenant-like manner.'*

If you are a License Holder then your rights of occupancy will be framed within the Landlord and Tenants Act 1985.

Diocesan Policy and Objectives

The Diocesan Policy in relation to Parsonage Houses and other houses is set out in detail in this document.

The Diocesan Property Team based here in the Diocesan Offices is ready to help with any queries that you may have about your Parsonage. During your occupancy, the team will be responsible for ensuring that the property is wind, water tight and dry and for the state of the essential services – water, power, drainage, sewage, and heating. The team is also responsible for any forest-type trees in the garden.

Your Obligations

Your obligations as occupant include the following:

To inform the Property Team if there is any damage or defect requiring the team's attention.

To be responsible for fruit trees, hedges, shrubs etc. in the garden.

To keep the garden in reasonably good order, and not allow rubbish etc to collect in the grounds.

Not to make or allow any alterations to the property which have not been authorized by the Property Committee or the Property Team at Clayton House including modifications to the essential service installations.

To vacate the property on leaving office and leave it empty and in a clean and tidy state.

Please contact members of the Property Team or your Archdeacon if you have any queries or encounter any difficulties at any time. We want to do all that we can to enable you to be comfortable and feel secure in your new home.

THE GUIDELINES

The Property Portfolio

The Diocese of Blackburn has two Archdeaonries and these are split into the appropriate Deaneries as follows:-

Archdeaconry of Blackburn

Accrington
Blackburn with Darwen
Burnley
Chorley
Leyland
Pendle and Whalley

Archdeaconry of Lancaster

Blackpool
Garstang
Kirkham
Lancaster and Morecambe
Poulton
Preston
Tunstall

There are, in the region of 200 Parsonage Houses and some 50 other properties including Curates houses.

Management of Glebe Land and the collection of ground rents are also dealt with by the Property Team.

The Property Team is part of the Central Services Department and consists of three members of staff :-

The Diocesan Surveyor	John Sunter	01254 50 30 83
Property Advisor	Sharon Anderson	01254 50 30 79
Property Secretary	Stephanie Worswick	01254 50 30 80

The Property Team is based at Clayton House and has responsibility for the maintenance and administration of the various properties and land within the Diocese. The Property Team is also on hand for advice to Parish Priests and to Parishes in relation to the properties for which the DBF acts as Custodian Trustees.

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Council Tax

In the Diocese of Blackburn, Council Tax on Parsonage and Curates houses is not paid from the parish share but is met by the respective PCC. When a house is vacant "pending occupation by a Minister or Religion" Council Tax is not payable.

Water Charges

When a Parsonage house is occupied in the normal way, then the PCC will be responsible for water rates. Tenants are responsible for water rates in respect of the houses which they rent.

Water rates are not paid when a house is temporarily unoccupied. As the rates are normally paid six months in advance, those who have paid their water rates should be able to claim a refund.

Grants

Internal Decoration

As part of the 2017 budget process the Internal Decoration Scheme has been significantly modified to reflect a much tighter budget.

Internal decoration is, and always has been, a responsibility of the occupier of the house. However, in order to encourage maintaining internal decorations in good condition and to minimise the cost of re-decoration during vacancies; the DBF will pay for limited awards of re-decoration during occupancy.

In order to allocate the limited budget equitably, the following policy will apply:

1. A payment by the DBF will need to be approved by the Property Team at Clayton House, prior to the work being carried out.
2. To be considered for approval the occupier should submit a brief request explaining what is to be decorated, the reasons for the redecoration and the likely cost.

If the proposal is to be approved, payment will only be made on production of a receipt.

The work can be undertaken by a local contractor, or by the occupier (in which case the cost of the materials only will be paid).

Once the budget for a particular financial year has been allocated, no further proposals will be approved until the following financial year. The previous scheme included an annual entitlement and the ability to bank this over a 3-year period.

Neither of these features apply to the new scheme.

It is unlikely that the cost of decorating more than one room per year will be considered.

Cookers

Applications can be made to the Property Committee for new cookers. The Property Committee will consider an application for a grant of up to £400 for a replacement cooker, provided the cooker is at least 5 years old or if when moving into a Diocesan property or Parsonage House there is no cooker already provided.

If the Diocese supplies the cooker then it will also deal with subsequent repairs to the appliance, provided that the cooker has been kept in a clean and good condition.

The cooker is to be free standing and not built-in (except where there is a built in cooker already provided)

It will not be possible to alter kitchen worktops and cupboards to allow for the fitting of larger or specialist cookers such as an Aga or range cookers. The cooker selected will need to fit into the existing opening and the cost of fitting is to be part of the grant.

Cookers are to be connected to existing fuel points. The Property Committee will not consider changes from electric to gas or vice versa, except where dual fuel points are provided or where a nearby supply point can be easily extended. The cost of such an alteration, which must be carried out by Diocesan technicians, will be deducted from the £400 grant.

The cooker should remain in the property and be in clean working order when the occupant leaves.

Insurance

The Committee insures the Parsonage and outhouses together with their fixtures and fittings for standard risk including third party claims. Any damage to the property, outhouses or fixtures and fittings should be reported immediately to the Property Team who will notify the insurers.

Household contents are not covered. It is important that Clergy make their own arrangements for the insurance of their personal possessions.

Repairs - Internal and External

Such work, which falls outside the quinquennial survey, will be ordered and organised by the Property Team using approved contractors. Very minor matters, such as the replacement of a screw, the Parish Priest or Curate may decide to carry out themselves and this is acceptable. However, care should be taken not to undertake any work which would put people at risk. It should be particularly noted that work to the electrical installation must only be carried out by a 'Competent Contractor'. This includes changing light fittings. Work to the gas installation must not be carried out except by a Gas Safe approved contractor – formerly Corgi.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Quinquennial Inspection

These are carried out by the Diocesan Surveyor on a five year cycle. The inspection will review the condition of the house and its grounds. The surveys are not intrusive and occupants are not asked to undertake special preparation prior to the survey. However, the surveyor will need to see right round the property and access should be afforded accordingly.

Following the survey, the Surveyor produces a QQ report that is put before the Property Committee for its consideration. When the Property Committee's instructions are received the Parish Priest is sent a copy of the report and asked if he/she wishes to make any comments on the work in the schedule. Any concerns are discussed and resolved before proceeding to put the work in hand. If it is not possible to resolve matters in the usual way it may be necessary to raise them with the Chairman of the Property Committee in the first instance or ultimately with the Property Committee itself if a solution cannot be found.

When work in the QQ report is completed it is checked by the Surveyor.

Property owned by the Parochial Church Council

The Diocesan Board of Finance will arrange for quinquennial Inspections to be carried out to Parochial Church Council property which house members of the clergy and other Diocesan staff. The cost of such surveys will be met by the parish share. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) will be expected, at its own cost, to carry out with all reasonable speed, all recommendations in the survey report and any repairs which should arise in the interim.

If the property is unoccupied, then the work set out in the survey report should be completed before the house is occupied unless an agreement is made beforehand with the Diocesan Board of Finance that certain works can take place after occupation. If the Parochial Church Council is not able to deal with the work in the survey report then the Board should be informed at the earliest opportunity.

Alterations

Occupants should be aware that under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 no additions or alterations may be made to a Parsonage house without the prior written consent of the Property Committee.

Others who occupy houses owned by the Diocese should note that their occupation gives them no right to alter or add to the property.

Green Guide

The Church Commissioners publish a book on Parsonage standards and good practice known commonly as 'the Green Guide', this is mainly aimed at the design of new Parsonage Houses. It is appreciated that unless a Parsonage is purpose-built it is unlikely to comply in every respect with the Green Guide. It is also accepted that in most cases it will not be possible for a Parsonage House to be altered in order to make it compliant and each case will need to be judged on its merits.

FROM MOVING IN TO MOVING OUT

Acceptance of an Appointment

During a vacancy a visit will be made by the Diocesan Surveyor to inspect the house and make recommendations about work that is required under the headings of repairs and improvements,

The Property Committee will consider the recommendations and authorise a schedule of work. Parish Share will be used to finance all the repairs and improvements thought to be necessary.

Before anyone is offered a post in the Diocese, where the occupation of a house is part of the appointment package, the individual will be shown the house and made aware of any work that the Property Committee is planning to carry out during the vacancy.

It will be made clear at interview that the appointment is offered on the basis of acceptance of the house for residence and that no extra work will be done other than that which has been already planned, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Keys

These are kept locally and arrangements for their hand over should be agreed with the appropriate Archdeacon. Priests-in-Charge, assistant Clergy and Lay occupants of properties will not be handed the keys until a license agreement or tenancy agreement has been signed and received.

Adaptations for the Disabled

It is the policy of the Committee to undertake reasonable adaptation of property to accommodate the needs of Clergy and their resident dependants. Grants from Social Services and other organisations will be utilised to enable these works to be expedited. It may not be possible to undertake all works prior to occupancy as the criteria for the award of these grants needs to be means tested and this test includes occupancy in the property.

Lodgers

There may be, from time to time, the need for members of your extended family to be with you in your home for longer periods. (More than 6 weeks – for reasons of illness as an example.) In these situations you should notify the appropriate Archdeacon and the Property Team so that appropriate arrangements can be made for a license to be put in place.

Pets

Houses should not be modified, for example, by the fitting of cat flaps etc. unless prior written approval has been obtained from the Property Team.

Meter Readings

Upon occupation and vacation of houses occupants should read all meters. This is important for your own protection.

Self-Financed Improvements

There are occasions where occupants wish to make improvements to properties that are outside the normal provision of the Property Committee. The Property Committee always considers requests for such improvements and applications should be made in writing to the Property Advisor/Surveyor who will then take the matter to the Property Committee. In reaching its decision the Committee will consider the effect of the improvement on the property in terms of both the local context and of the Diocesan property portfolio. A key consideration will be the ongoing cost of maintenance once the occupant has moved on. The Property Committee may stipulate that the improvement must be removed at the end of the occupancy if it is thought to be unsustainable.

The improvements will only be allowed if they are carried out to a specification agreed with the Diocesan Surveyor and subject to inspection of the works on completion.

PCC-Financed Improvements

From time to time PCCs wish to support the ministry of their Clergy (and indeed the work of the Property Committee) by funding improvements to the property.

Such improvements must be approved by the Committee and will be assessed on the criteria outlined above. Such improvements will only be sanctioned up to an agreed level.

Vacating

When vacating a Parsonage the following advice must be followed.

Keys should be left with the Churchwardens.

Meters should be read and utility accounts closed.

The house must be made secure.

Fittings and fixtures must remain.

The cooker must be left in clean condition.

The house must be cleared of all furniture and personal possessions including lofts and outhouses. Carpets and curtains may be left for the next occupants.

The house must be left clean, tidy and in good repair.

Any documentation regarding the sweeping of chimneys should be sent to the Property Office.

Each Churchwarden will be sent a letter outlining the requirements of the Insurance Company and responsibility for utility charges etc during the interregnum.

Spouses in Parsonage Houses Following Death In Service

The death of one's spouse is, in all situations, a great tragedy and a time of difficulty, for the bereaved partner and family. The Diocesan Officers and the Archdeacons in particular work carefully to balance the needs of the bereaved family with the needs of the Parish and the house as a focus for future ministry.

Following the death of a serving Clergy person, the spouse should be reassured that he/she will be able to remain in the house for a period of not less than six months.

During that period, the relevant Archdeacon will work closely with the family to discuss and consider their future housing needs.

Any other specific requirements or expectations the family may have beyond this should be discussed fully and openly with the Archdeacon.

Retirement

On retirement, after consultation with the relevant Archdeacon and Chairman of the Property Committee, it may be possible to stay in the property for one month rent free but the cost of outgoings such as council tax, electricity, gas, water, telephone and TV licence, if applicable, will be the responsibility of the occupant.

Following that, if there are particular needs, once again, in consultation with the relevant Archdeacon and Chairman of the Property Committee, this may be extended on a month by month basis but from this point on you will be charged the mean market rent.

GENERAL GUIDANCE (PROPERTY)

Chimneys and Flues

The regular sweeping of chimneys used for open fires, or for any solid fuel burning stove, is essential. Blocked chimneys or flues can be fatal. Chimney fires can cause great damage to the house and unnecessary inconvenience to the family. Keeping chimneys swept is the occupant's responsibility.

Room Vents

Please be aware that in rooms that house gas fires, open fires or boilers any vents fitted to outside must be kept clear.

For your safety they are not to be covered to prevent draughts.

Air must be allowed to flow from outside to the gas fire, open fire or boiler.

Decorations – External

The Committee will arrange for the outside of the house, including its outbuildings, to be painted, stained or treated with preservative as appropriate as part of the quinquennial works at approximately five yearly intervals.

Decorations – Internal

If consequential redecoration is necessary as the result of repairs or improvements carried out to the property then the work will be added to the cost of the job and paid for by the Diocese. If decoration is needed because of an escape of water, fire or some other insured loss then the cost of redecoration will form part of the insurance claim and will be dealt with by the Property Team.

General re-decorations: Regarding internal decoration in other areas of the house, many PCCs assist Clergy and some occupants "do it themselves". If you or other volunteers carry out the work, care must be taken to ensure that everyone works safely, within their competence and to a decent standard. Whatever method you adopt the Property Team trusts that you will hand the house over in good order. Thought should be given to colour schemes. If you paint the walls in bold colours they must be returned to neutral shades prior to you vacating the property to ensure that the property can immediately be re-occupied either by a member of the Clergy or a tenant. Please see page 4.

Gutters and Downpipes

Most gutters, down pipes and gullies are cleaned annually. This work is organised by the Diocesan Surveyor.

Under no circumstances should clergy or members of their family undertake gutter clearances themselves because of health and safety risks.

Loft Ladders

It is not the policy of the Property Committee to install a loft ladder unless it is considered necessary to enhance storage provision which falls short of what might reasonably be expected to be available.

Overflow Pipes

If you notice that you have water leaking or dripping from an overflow pipe please inform the Property Team immediately. This could be indicative of a much more serious problem and in the worst cases could result in your home being flooded. Please do not ignore leaking overflow pipes. They are easy to fix in the early stages but can cause costly and major problems to the structure if left unattended.

Pest Control

The top ten common household pests in the UK are flies, fleas, ants, wasps, mice, rats, spiders, moths, woodlice, bedbugs and cockroaches. Local authorities generally deal with matters of infestation and therefore if they are employed to remove them the Diocese will reimburse the cost.

Occupants should ensure that domestic pets such as cats and dogs are regularly treated to prevent flea infestations.

Security

The Property Committee places a high priority on ensuring that houses have good physical security.

It is not appropriate or possible to seek to make Parsonage houses into fortresses, for inappropriate measures can single them out as targets and are therefore counter-productive.

Occupants concerned about the security of their house are advised to consult with the Property Team who will be able to offer guidance on good practice.

Safety

Would occupants kindly ensure that children and dogs are not left in the same room as contractors carrying out work in the property. In order that our contractors can meet their duty of care to yourselves, please comply with any safety requests they may make.

GENERAL GUIDANCE (GROUNDS)

Boundaries

When work is required to existing boundary fences, walls etc the Property Team must be consulted. Responsibility may be with the owner on either side, or it may be shared with them. If responsibility is with the property or partly with the property, then the Diocese will meet the cost or its share of the cost. The Diocese cannot meet the expense of changing boundary fencing for the occupant's preferred type for their children or domestic pets.

Driveways

Clergy families should keep all paved areas in good condition with weeds removed and drains kept clear of earth and other obstructions. Any deterioration of the surface should be reported to the Property Team.

Fishponds

The DBF is not responsible for the upkeep or maintenance of fishponds. When you vacate your property please ensure that all fish have been removed from the pond and that no ongoing maintenance will be required after your departure.

Gardens

There is no DBF money for the maintenance of gardens except when a new house is provided and then there is a once and for all provision. It is expected that gardens will be kept in good order by the Clergy or, during vacancy, by the PCC.

There are certain tax concessions available to Clergy for expenditure on garden maintenance. The appropriate form is sent to Clergy each year in respect of this and is combined with the form for tax allowance on heating, lighting and cleaning of the Parsonage House.

Hedges

Hedges are considered as part of the garden and as such are the responsibility of the occupant, or, in a vacancy, the PCC. Expenditure on maintenance will not be reimbursed.

Occupants of Parsonages should not plant *Cupressus leylandii* as hedge screening because of its rapid growth. Hedges should be kept at a height that is easy to maintain. (Max 6ft or 1.8m)

Japanese Knotweed

There are increasing instances in Parsonage properties where we have to deal with infestations of this difficult weed. First, it is important to note that it is illegal to plant or propagate this plant. Secondly, it is extremely invasive and causes serious damage to buildings and other structures.

The weed is difficult and expensive to eradicate but it is vital that it is removed once it is seen on site. This is a task for a specialist contractor and should not be attempted by occupants. Please contact the Property Team if you see the plant in your garden. Typically the weed looks like a cluster of tall straight shoots and resembles bamboo. It grows with great speed.

Lighting

The outside of the house should be well lit for convenience and safety and to help with security. Each house is different and what is required will depend on local circumstances, the position of the house, the closeness of streetlights etc. Where additional security is required, the Property Committee will consider meeting the cost of automatically operated external lights controlled with passive infrared sensors.

Trees

Advice should always be sought from the Diocesan Surveyor before any tree is planted or replaced. Trees grown in proximity to buildings can cause severe and very expensive structural damage.

The Property Team must be contacted if a tree needs reducing, lopping or felling and the work will be organised through the Diocesan Office. There are regulations in force concerning trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders and trees in Conservation areas. The Local Authority strictly enforces these regulations. Their written consent is required before any tree work is carried out even if the tree is diseased or dead. Unauthorised lopping or felling, or the causing of damage to a tree, will result in a fine and can cause much ill feeling. Normally when work to trees is required the Property Team will appoint a specialist contractor who will be required to conduct consultations with the Local Planning Authority before proceeding.

Trees will not be felled or trimmed at the request of neighbours. In line with Local Council policy, neighbours are not entitled to a right to light nor can they expect to have trees reduced or felled to address leaf litter.

Consideration will be given to such work if the cost is covered by the neighbouring property owner and the work is carried out under the supervision of the Arborist appointed by the Diocese.

If there is a problem relating to structural damage of either their property or boundary walls a tree surgeon will be employed to look into the matter and to produce a report.

If it is found that there is a genuine case for action the matter will be dealt with by the Diocesan Surveyor and the tree surgeon. However, it may also involve the Diocesan Solicitor if the situation is serious.

MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL SERVICES

Intruder Alarm Systems

Alarms are maintained by the Property Committee. The Property Committee does not meet the cost of a maintenance contract; except if this is a stipulation of the occupier's contents insurance, in which case a grant of £50 is paid towards the cost. Claims should be submitted to the Property Team.

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are fitted to all houses. Replacement of the batteries is the responsibility of the occupant.

In a standard smoke alarm, the battery will need to be replaced every 12 months. Always check the alarm regularly and replace the battery when necessary. Never remove it for any other purposes. Please check the smoke alarm is in working order when you move into a new property.

Carbon Monoxide Monitors

These should be checked to ensure they are in working order. If in doubt please replace with new. Please check the carbon monoxide monitor is in working order when you move into a new property.

Some smoke and carbon monoxide alarms have sealed for life batteries which cannot be replaced. If either of these alarms show a low battery warning signal, please contact the Property Department.

Built-in appliances

In certain situations built in appliances may be found in kitchens (normally where houses have been bought into the estate). The Property Committee is committed to maintaining these appliances. However, a pragmatic approach will be taken towards removing these appliances (normally at vacancy or kitchen refurbishment). It is not the intention of the Property Committee to remove good operational equipment unnecessarily.

Electrical Installations

The DBF is required by law to undertake a periodic inspection (every 5 years) of the electrical installations. This inspection may highlight necessary repairs or upgrades to the system and these works are given a very high priority.

Please ensure you are aware where the main electrical supply is in case this needs to be isolated in an emergency.

Gas & Oil Installations

The Property Committee has in place arrangements for the annual testing of the gas and oil installation including all appliances in the house. The visit will include the servicing of any installations that is required.

The Property Committee, in consultation with the occupant concerned, reserves the option of removing unsafe gas fires and replacing with electric when it considers this to be more appropriate.

Gas fired cookers will be tested as part of the annual gas test.

Please ensure you are aware where the main gas valve is in case this needs to be isolated in an emergency.

If operating instructions for boilers/cookers are not available, these can usually be downloaded from the internet. If this is not possible, please contact the Property Department for more help.

If a room with a gas fire is to be used as a bedroom then it will be necessary to change the fire for one with an extra safety device. Therefore if you decide to make use of a room for this purpose please contact the Property Team in the first instance.

Gas Leaks

If there is a suspicion of a gas leak the following procedure should be followed. Extinguish all naked flames. Do not switch on or off any electric lights or appliances because the spark in the switch may cause an explosion.

If possible turn off the gas supply at the mains.

Ensure good ventilation by opening doors and windows wide. Seek help.

Call Gas Emergency Services – Tel: 0800 111999 – 24 hours a day.

Oil Heating

Please make sure you order your heating oil in good time and never allow the tank to run dry. This will cause your whole system to stop working and will require a qualified heating engineer to attend site, remove all the air-locks from the system and get it working again. If you suspect an oil leak anywhere in the system it is essential that you inform the Property Team immediately. Leaks can be noticed by smell, grass and plants dying or brown patches appearing on your lawns or borders.

Please be extremely careful when gardening, digging, strimming or cutting the grass when you are anywhere near the oil pipes or oil tank in your garden.

Secondary Heating

It is the intention of the Property Committee to provide secondary heating in the study and the principal living room. This heat source is designed to enable other areas of the house to be kept cooler through the day or to provide a boost in cold weather or when hospitality is being offered.

The secondary heating source should therefore be instantaneous in nature (i.e. a gas or electric fire). The Property Committee does not consider wood burning stoves to be capable of providing such a provision. The Property Committee recognises that solid fuel fires already exist in some Clergy houses and it is not intended that these should be removed.

However, the request for new solid fuel appliances may not be allowed without the express permission of the Property Committee which would not normally be given unless there were exceptional circumstances and on the advice of the Diocesan Surveyor.

Private Sewage Installations

The Property Team has in place annual provisions for the inspection and maintenance of private sewage installations.

It is particularly important that the guidelines concerning what may or may not be flushed down your toilet or put into the drains are strictly adhered to for this type of installation.

Please note these items must **NOT** be flushed into a septic tank:

Baby wipes

Cat litter

Chemicals: bleach, thinners, oils, varnishes, paints, pesticides

Cigarette butts

Coffee grounds

Cooking oil

Cotton swabs (Q-tips)

Dental floss

Female hygiene products

Latex products

Medicine

Nappies

The above list is by no means exhaustive but indicates the wide range of products that are not compatible with a septic tank.

Septic Tanks

The Committee will meet the costs of emptying septic tanks. The Property Team arranges an annual inspection of septic tanks and a maintenance report for this is retained at the Diocesan Office.

Showers

Curtains and shower doors must be properly positioned to avoid water getting on to the floors. All seals should be regularly checked and any defects reported to the Property Team early before significant water damage can occur.

RENEWAL OF FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Bathrooms/Shower Room

Refurbishment of bathrooms and shower rooms, including renewal of separate wcs, will be undertaken using white sanitary ware and non-slip flooring.

Kitchen refits

When Clergy are in occupation, or if the benefice is vacant but the incoming Parish Priest is known, they will be given a choice from a range of kitchen units. The units in question will be in a particular price range, will be of a neutral colour, will be robust and easy to clean. There will be a choice of worktops, door handles, sinks, taps and floorcoverings, with the stipulation that the sink should be easy clean stainless steel and worktops do not have a gloss finish.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF FIRE

Please refer to Fire Brigade Website for details
www.fireservices.co.uk

It is recommended that you prepare an escape plan in case of fire before you move into your new house. The Lancashire Fire and Rescue website offers guidance in preparing a plan.

Following modifications that have been carried out across the Diocesan housing portfolio, escape should be possible from windows in a least 2 bedrooms. (escape means being able to get out of the bedroom window and onto a ladder.) If you do not consider that it is possible to get out of the bedroom windows in at least 2 of your bedrooms, please contact the Property Department.

Windows keys should be available for each window in the house. If these are missing, please contact the Property Department.

WHAT THE DIOCESE DOES NOT PROVIDE

Carpets

Carpets are not provided by the DBF and are a private matter for occupants. At the end of your occupancy you may leave these items behind for the use of your successor in office. It should not be assumed by incoming occupants that carpets or curtains will be left for their use as a matter of course.

The Diocese provides and takes maintenance responsibility for vinyl flooring surfaces in kitchens, WCs and bathrooms.

Cookers

The Diocese gives a grant of £400 for the provision of a cooker - refer to cooker grants. Please also see details under 'Built-in appliances.'

Cleaning

The Board does not provide cleaning prior to the new priest moving in. If the Board has undertaken works to the property, a builders clean will be commissioned for the rooms/area within which work has taken place.

Curtains

The Diocese does not provide curtains for any area of the property. The resettlement grant offered by the Diocese is intended to cover, in part, the costs of curtains.

White goods and furniture

In some cases white goods are left in the Vicarage by the previous Incumbent. Unfortunately, the Diocese is unable to take responsibility for these appliances and if the new Incumbent wishes to make use of these, we are unable to confirm that they are in working order or are safe to use.

Similarly, if soft furnishings are left in the Vicarage, the Diocese is unable to confirm that they comply with current fire safety regulations.

Telephones

The initial installation of a telephone socket for the 'public number' is the responsibility of the DBF. Where occupants wish to install a second line for personal private use they may do so but all arrangements for this are personal and local. The repair, maintenance, and replacement of the telephone are the responsibility of the Clergy or of the PCC as locally agreed.

The Property Committee is not responsible for installing, maintaining or providing extra points for answering machines, computers or other office equipment. Cable or Satellite Telephone or TV installations of fibre-optic telephone and / or satellite cabling is permitted only on written application. Installation is subject to the written approval of the Property Committee and to an undertaking that the occupant and/or PCC formally accept the responsibility for any and all consequential costs arising.

The erection of a satellite dish may require the consent of the Local Authority, and the householder should make his or her own enquiries about this.

The Property Committee does not accept responsibility for the provision or repair of TV aerials and related equipment.

EMERGENCY CALL OUT

Outside office hours and in the event of an emergency, please contact:-

John Sunter	Preferred person	0779 273 5546
Sharon Anderson	Preferred person	0777 850 3141
Revd Canon Andrew Sage (Chairman- Property)		01253 351 484
The Venerable Mark Ireland (Archdeacon of Blackburn)		01254 262 571

Guidance on Asbestos in homes

Some background information on asbestos is set out below. This has been adapted from a document issued by the London Borough of Merton.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral. It has been used for over a hundred years in buildings for fireproofing, thermal, electrical and sound insulation, roofing and flooring materials, gasket and friction products and many other uses. All forms (blue, brown and white) are a health hazard when the asbestos fibres are released into the air and inhaled. Inhaled fibres can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma (a cancer of the inner lining of the chest or abdominal wall).

Asbestos in the home

Asbestos may be found in the home as building materials containing asbestos were widely used between 1930 - 1980, particularly from the 1960s. Asbestos has also been used in some heat resistant household products such as oven gloves and ironing boards. The use of asbestos in these products decreased greatly around the mid-1980s and since 1993 the use of asbestos in most products has been banned.

Is asbestos dangerous?

Asbestos and materials containing asbestos that are in good condition pose very little risk to health. Asbestos can be dangerous if damaged, releasing dust and fibres into the atmosphere. The fibres can be inhaled and may lodge in the lungs. If enough fibres are inhaled they can lead to diseases such as asbestosis, lung cancer and another type of cancer called mesothelioma.

You are most at risk if you inhale high levels of asbestos fibres over a period of time. Everyday exposure at home or outdoors is usually very low and poses little risk to health.

Where is asbestos found?

Asbestos has good insulating and fire-protecting properties. This led to it being used for a range of building materials and household products. These include cement sheeting on walls, roofs, and garages, gutters, tiles, cold-water tanks, fire doors and as a sprayed coating for lagging, insulation and decorative purposes.

What do I do if I suspect I have asbestos in my house?

Do not disturb asbestos material. Asbestos material should only be removed when it cannot be repaired, or is likely to be disturbed. Please contact the Property Office if you have any concerns.

Guidance

You may be aware that we have been undertaking asbestos surveys of all residential properties (except those built after 2000, when the use of asbestos was finally banned). Surveys of most properties have now been completed.

The reports produced by the Surveyors (A&L Consultants) are accessible via their website. You can access the report for your property by:

- Visiting their website www.alconsultants.org
- Clicking in **Site Login**
- Entering the **Client Code** which is: dob
- Entering the **Building Ref** for your property; This code will be e-mailed to each new occupant. Please contact the Property Department if you do not receive this code. This has a column headed 'Report on Database' If there is a 'Y' for your property, there is a report on the database. If there is a 'N' the survey has yet to be carried out. If the entry says '2000' then the property was built post 2000 and there will not be a report.
- Entering **Your Name** as Assessors Name
- Click on **View**
- Click on **Asbestos**

Once you have accessed the report for your property, the most important sections are:

- Executive Summary and/or Overview (depending on report format)
- Floor Plan in the Appendix

The overview shows if asbestos has been found or it is presumed to be present. The overview describes the location and the type of asbestos. If your property has asbestos, the annotated floor plan shows the location. The overview section also contains bespoke recommendations for each occurrence. The report also contains a full register which gives information of all rooms at the property. If the Surveyor was unable to access an area this is recorded in the overview as a 'no access room'. At a later phase of the project we will try to gain access to these areas. In the meantime, if there are any 'no access rooms' in your house and you enter them, please do not disturb anything. If you have any concerns about materials in 'no access rooms', please contact the Property Team.

If the report classifies a material as presumed asbestos: you should assume the material does contain asbestos.

When recommendations have been made by the Asbestos Surveyors for remedial work to any asbestos components, the recommendations have been implemented. All regular DBF contractors have access to the database.

The Asbestos Surveyor covered all visible, accessible areas so far as reasonably practical within your home that are likely to be encountered through normal occupancy, however, areas that required major intrusion or disturbance have not been accessed (i.e. removal of boxing, drilling cavities etc.) Therefore, there may still be unidentified asbestos containing materials in hidden places, consequently, you must not carry out any intrusive or destructive works. In addition, some external perimeter roof level components – under cloaking, soffits and barge boards were not checked. To come in contact with these components would require step ladders or ladders and no house occupier is expected to have any reason to come into contact with these components in a way that may damage them. If you are uncertain about these components, please contact the Property Team.

Some properties have old floor tiles containing asbestos. If you are arranging for new floor coverings to be installed, please check the report to see if the room concerned has asbestos floor tiles. If it does, please tell the firm laying the floor covering.

A lot of properties have textured coatings to ceiling and sometimes walls. This is often known as artex, some of these coatings contained asbestos. If you have any of these coatings on your walls or ceiling, please contact the Property Office before carrying out any decoration work that would disturb the artex.

Finally, please remember that as long as asbestos containing materials are in good condition they pose very little risk to health. However, if there are any materials in your house which are damaged or releasing dust and you suspect they may contain asbestos, please contact the Property Office immediately.

APPENDIX 1: INSTRUCTIONS TO CHURCHWARDENS DURING VACANCIES

During vacancies the foregoing guidelines will be of use to Churchwardens, who as part of their duties, take on responsibility for benefice property. In particular they are required to ensure the following guidance is adhered to:

- a. The Churchwardens should notify the water authority immediately the house becomes vacant. The Property Team at the Diocesan Office should be notified that the house has become vacant.
- b. All houses are insured with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

A condition of the block policy is that, when a house is empty, a security check (including the efficiency of locks) should be carried out by the Churchwardens or a deputy at least once a week, both inside as well as outside the premises.
- c. During the vacancy, during the months of October to March the central heating should be left to run constantly at a minimum temperature of 6 degrees. The cost of this should be borne locally but the house will appear more welcoming for prospective candidates if the interviews are taking place during winter months.
- d. The existing telephone number will only be preserved if the PCC maintains the telephone line as the subscriber. If the telephone is disconnected, a new number may be allocated when it is reconnected. Discretion is left to the PCC to decide if the telephone line should be retained and if it is, the PCC should pay the telephone bills during the vacancy.
- e. Parish equipment should be removed from the Parsonage house unless the Archdeacon has consented to it remaining. It should not be assumed that a new successor in office would automatically consent to its return once the appointment has been made. If permission is given for articles to be left on the premises it will be necessary to provide contents insurance.
- f. Churchwardens should also ensure that the house is clean for the arrival of the new Incumbent and for the PCC to pay any money that may be needed for this purpose.
- g. Electricity / Gas and all service charges are the responsibility of the PCC during a vacancy. The Churchwardens should notify the Property Team of any problems.

- h. The Churchwardens are responsible for the upkeep of the garden of the Parsonage House. The grass should be cut regularly, and before the new Incumbent arrives the garden should be tidied. This work should be paid for by the PCC. Trees should not be trimmed or felled without consent from the Property Team.
- i. When a new Incumbent or Priest in Charge comes to the Parish the removal expenses will be reimbursed in full by the DBF, if the removal is within the British Isles. The PCC should not purchase carpets or curtains from the outgoing Incumbent.