



# **St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance Clergy Housing Handbook**

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## KEY CONTACTS

### THE ESTATES DEPARTMENT

The house that you occupy is provided by the Board of Finance and supported by the work of the Estates Department who are employed by the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF).

The Board owns and manages more than 270 houses for clergy.

### TO REPORT AN ISSUE WITH YOUR HOME:

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## **FOREWORD FROM THE ESTATES SECRETARY**

### **Welcome to your new home**

This short booklet tells you about the Estates Department and the policies, procedures and people that you need to know about as you take possession of your home.

We aim to provide a good standard of accommodation for ministry and home life and we maintain our housing stock so that our properties are fit for current and future generations.

Maintaining our considerable housing stock to this standard is a significant task and this often places a greater call on our resources than available budgets allow us to meet. Although we may not always be able to carry out improvements, we do strive to manage the resources at our disposal to ensure that as far as possible you are able to enjoy living in your home.

Our priority remains ensuring that your home provides you with a secure space, the necessary amenities of a home, and to ensure that repairs are carried out as quickly as possible with the minimum disruption to you.

Quinquennial inspections are carried out to identify work which may be necessary but we are also reliant on you to advise us of any issues.

From the time you know you are going to live in the property until you have vacated it satisfactorily, the Estates Department shares with you responsibility for its care and upkeep. This handbook is designed to give you the information you need about how this works in practice and to help you with the care of your home.

Your occupancy of the property forms part of your terms and conditions for your ministry.

The Estates Department is based at Holywell Lodge, St Albans and details of how and when you contact it are set out above and below. I hope that this handbook will be a useful guide and support to you as you make your home in the diocese. I hope you will settle quickly into your new home and enjoy living there during your ministry.

Best wishes,

Iain Blythe

## **ESSENTIAL INFORMATION AND LEGAL MATTERS**

### **OFFICE HOURS**

The hours when you can speak to the staff directly are 9.00am to 5pm, Mondays to Fridays.

### **EMERGENCIES**

In the case of real emergency, i.e. fire or flood, authority is given to the occupant to take immediate action to reduce further damage. The Estates Department should be contacted at the earliest possible time and the Archdeacon informed.

### **GENERAL OBLIGATIONS OF OCCUPIERS**

Generally, occupiers have a duty to take proper care of their home.

Your home is a private domestic dwelling and access by members of the public is by invitation.

The DBF, its officers or agents may enter any property which is provided as a house of residence on giving reasonable notice (except in an emergency) to inspect or carry out repairs to the property or to inspect, repair, replace or remove any contents of the property which have been provided by the DBF. The DBF will endeavour to agree a convenient time with you for such access, but may need to exercise such a right at other times (for example to inspect the gas or water supply).

There is a clear division of responsibility between the Property Committee and you which can be summarised as follows:

The Committee's responsibilities:

1. To keep in good repair the structure and exterior of the parsonage house.
2. To keep in good repair all walls, fences, gates, drives, drains and gutters other than those for which a third party is responsible.
3. To keep in repair and proper working order all fixtures and fittings in the parsonage house, including the installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity and for sanitation, space heating and heating water.
4. To carry out a quinquennial inspection.
5. To insure the fabric of the parsonage house.
6. To ensure that appropriate security is provided.
7. To pay the council tax and water rates for those of incumbent status in parsonages and DBF properties and the council tax only for assistant curates (the PCCs to pay the water rates).

The Committee is under no obligation to carry out improvements but does so whenever appropriate and funds allow.

Your responsibilities:

- A. To keep the interior of the house clean and in good decorative condition.
- B. To keep all gutters clear of debris.
- C. To keep the garden tidy and trees and hedges in a safe and well managed condition.
- D. To inform the Diocesan Office of any problems in the house that might lead to structural damage or greater expense in the future if left unattended. It is important to inform the Diocesan Office as soon as possible if an insurance claim needs to be made.
- E. To notify the Diocesan Office immediately when any local authority planning notice is received relating to development on a neighbouring property.
- F. To insure those contents of the parsonage house which do not belong to the benefice. (This becomes the PCC's responsibility through the churchwardens during a vacancy in the incumbency).
- G. Security: To ensure that doors and windows are secured and locked when the house is unoccupied.
- H. Not to make any repairs, alterations or additions to the property without the consent of the Estates Department.

Iain Blythe  
Estates Secretary

## REPAIRS, INSPECTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

### 1. Interim Repairs

Non-urgent day to day repairs which do not require immediate attention will be carried out between quinquennial inspections to avoid damage to the building and they should be dealt with only after liaison with the Estates Department.

The Property Committee is grateful for any minor repairs which an occupant can carry out on a DIY basis and the cost of materials will be reimbursed if necessary. The Estates Department will arrange for the repair to be carried out or, on occasion, authorise an occupant to use a local contractor.

Unless these procedures are followed, the Property Committee cannot guarantee that the expenditure will be met by the DBF.

### 2. Emergency work

Emergency works are those which must be carried out within 48 hours, i.e. gas leaks, re-glazing and re-securing property after break-ins, leaking pipes and water penetration and blocked drains.

Where possible the Estates Department should be informed of the problem and its instructions and advice sought before work is carried out, and in any case as soon as the office has re-opened after a holiday or weekend. The Surveyor's office, Rumball Sedgwick, is sometimes open at times when the Diocesan Office is closed. When appropriate, the Estates Department will advise you when you should contact Rumball Sedgwick.

### 3. Quinquennial Works

Every house we are responsible for is inspected at five-yearly intervals. These inspections are normally carried out by the Diocesan Surveyor. The report covers the condition of the external fabric of the house and the internal fittings. It also includes a comment on the state of internal decorations which are the occupant's responsibility. The Surveyor may mention possible desirable improvements but this does not mean that these will be undertaken (see section 7 below). The report is sent to the occupant for their comments and these and the report are considered by the Property Committee. If approved, the Diocesan Surveyor will draw up a specification for any necessary work and obtain competitive tenders.

The Estates Department is always interested to hear comments regarding contractors' work. Occupants may wish to recommend local contractors for inclusion on the tender list. The Diocesan Surveyor should be notified of any such preference at the time the survey is carried out. Any complaints about the standard of workmanship should be notified to the Diocesan Surveyor.

Any major structural problems should be notified to the Estates Department as soon as they occur as it may, in some circumstances, be advisable to bring forward a quinquennial inspection. Similarly, in certain situations, a quinquennial may be deferred, for example, if an appointment is pending or further investigation of structural problems is required.

External decorations are no longer carried out routinely every 5 years but on the Surveyor's assessment of need which may be at a longer interval.

#### 4. Internal decorations

In addition to the decorating grant which is available for new occupants, grants for materials only can be applied for every year by those already in post. Occupants are sent an e-mail each January asking them how much they anticipate spending on decorating materials that year. Grants are agreed by the Property Committee and can be claimed at any point during the year by occupants sending in the relevant receipts. In this way, it is hoped that occupants will be encouraged to carry out a rolling programme of internal decorations. **PCCs often make funds or resources available to redecorate your home.**

#### 5. Other improvement works

Financial pressures on Property Committee funds mean that improvements are carried out on a strict basis of priority from a waiting list.

Normally, items are added to the waiting list as a result of the Surveyor's quinquennial inspection but requests for improvements from occupants are also considered for inclusion.

The list is considered at a meeting held at the end of each year when decisions are taken on which items should be carried out in the following year.

If you feel that there are pastoral reasons for a particular improvement to be carried out you should contact your Archdeacon.

#### 6. Contractors

If a contractor arranges a time with an occupant to carry out a repair and the occupant fails to keep the appointment, any abortive charges a contractor might charge must be met by the occupant except in exceptional circumstances.

**Contractors and agents must be treated with respect at all times.**

## **AN A – Z OF PROPERTY MATTERS**

### **ACCESS FOR OCCUPANTS**

Where alterations are required for the purposes of complying with legislation and accommodating particular access needs of the occupant and their family, the arrangements should be discussed with the Archdeacon and the Estates Secretary. Costs are often met by local social service providers.

### **ACCESS FOR REPAIRS AND CONSULTATION**

You will be consulted about any works that are to be undertaken on the property. Some of these may be for health and safety reasons or for essential maintenance. You will be expected to allow access to diocesan surveyors or contractors for this purpose. For other works, timing and extent will be by agreement.

### **ALARM SYSTEMS AND SECURITY**

As funds for improvements are severely limited, the Property Committee cannot meet the whole cost of the installation of intruder alarms except in exceptional circumstances.

It is able to contribute if a grant from Marshall's Charity can be secured and the PCC agrees to meet the remaining cost. Once installed, the PCC becomes responsible for the annual maintenance charge, throughout successive incumbencies, and will also be responsible for the cost of removing the system should it cease to function properly.

The Property Committee takes the security of occupants very seriously. It has a security policy which recognises that parsonage houses are often at greater risk than other properties and which aims to make occupants feel safe without turning their houses into fortresses.

Security measures are reviewed at each quinquennial inspection to ensure:

- All ground floor and vulnerable first floor windows have locks.
- Glazed porches and external doors have toughened glass.
- There is adequate security lighting.
- The front door has a chain and, where necessary, a spy hole.
- Fences and gates are in good repair and prevent unauthorised access to back gardens.

The cost of these items is met by the Property Committee.

### **ALTERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS BY CLERGY**

The DBF recognises that you may wish to undertake improvements and you may apply to the Estates Department with proposals for these and they will be considered carefully. However, no alterations may be made without the written permission of the Estates Secretary.

No changes may be made to the property that adversely affect the safety of occupants, the soundness of the property or the Board's insurance. If any alteration is agreed, the contractor must

be approved by the Estates Secretary on behalf of the DBF. You may be required to reinstate unauthorised works at your own expense.

The DBF is working to improve the overall standard of the properties in the portfolio and so you may be approached about improvements to the property. Your co-operation in enabling these to happen would be valued.

## **ANIMALS**

Only domestic pets should be kept in any of the Board's properties. The Property Committee may consider requests for non-domestic animals. Please contact the Estates Secretary in the first instance.

(See also "PETS" below.)

## **ASBESTOS**

Asbestos is a substance which is regulated by law because of the health and safety risks that it can pose in a building if it is not handled properly.

Where necessary an inspection will be carried out so that anyone working on the house can do so safely.

## **BATHROOMS**

If your house has a shower over the bath, the provision of a shower curtain of sufficient length to avoid water draining onto the floor is your responsibility.

## **BATS**

Bats are a protected species and there are expensive fines for disturbing them. If you think you have a colony of them in the property, please notify the Estates Department immediately.

## **BROADBAND**

Broadband internet is your responsibility. However, the PCC is expected to assist with part of the cost as it directly relates to your duties.

## **BOILERS AND CENTRAL HEATING**

The Diocese takes responsibility for gas checks and the servicing of both gas and oil boilers in all parsonages or other houses owned by the Diocesan Board of Finance. These are carried out annually by authorised contractors appointed by the Diocese and occupants will be contacted direct by contractors in order that arrangements can be made for the work to be done. If an open fire is used then it is the occupant's responsibility to have the chimney swept annually prior to the start of the heating season.

As finance is limited, boilers are only replaced when they have deteriorated beyond a certain point, not automatically when they reach a certain age. In line with the Committee's environmental strategy, condensing boilers will be installed whenever the old boiler has failed, is near the end of its life, is troublesome or as part of kitchen improvements carried out in a vacancy.

The Surveyor will assess the number of cases where boiler controls could be improved during the course of quinquennial inspections. Examples of improvements which could be made include installing thermostatic radiator valves, room thermostats, improved programmers and, possibly, zoning.

Oil fired boilers are replaced by gas fired ones wherever a gas supply is readily available and affordable.

In winter, or unseasonable cold snaps, it is essential that houses are adequately heated and particularly when they are unoccupied. Water should be turned off at the mains during holiday periods at all times of the year. Any claims for water damage to house or contents may not be accepted by the insurance company if this procedure is not followed.

## **BOUNDARIES**

It is very important that the boundaries to the property are properly marked and maintained both for legal reasons and to promote good relations with neighbours.

If you know that the boundary is being altered either decreasing 'encroaching on' or increasing the size of the plot, you should let the Estates Secretary know immediately.

You should report any damage or deterioration to walls around the property and inform the Estates Department if you think there is a risk to you, your family or the public.

If the building shares an internal wall with a neighbouring property, 'a party wall', then you should inform the Estates Department immediately of any concerns you may have about it. This will include its condition and any works on it undertaken by your neighbours.

## **BURGLARIES**

If you are unfortunate enough to have a burglary, these are the steps to follow:

- Notify the police immediately and get a crime reference number.
- Contact the Estates Department as soon as possible.
- Contact your own insurance provider in relation to your contents insurance.
- You can take steps to commission urgent repairs such as boarding up the property to make it safe and secure until proper repairs can be carried out.
- Send the account to the Estates Department which will arrange for the insurance claim to be made in respect of the buildings insurance.
- Inform the churchwardens.

## **CARPETS AND FLOOR COVERINGS**

Carpets are the responsibility of clergy in houses.

The Property Committee is concerned that where fitted carpets are fitted to wood block floors or to floors with a vinyl tile covering, the floor surface should not be damaged by the method of fixing the gripper edging strip.

If it is intended to have wall to wall carpet fitted to such a floor where the edging strip is not already in place, it is necessary to ensure that the edging strip is fitted by drilling, Rawl-plugging the holes and screwing. In this way the floors will not be damaged if a future family wishes to revert to unfitted carpets with the borders exposed, since the screws can be easily removed and the small holes discreetly filled.

The Board is responsible for flooring in the kitchen, bathroom and toilets.

## **CHIMNEYS AND FLUES**

If your property has a chimney flue which is in use, it is your responsibility to make sure that it is swept annually. If the flue is not in use, it must be properly closed off to prevent damp and debris collecting inside the building. You should contact the Estates Department for assistance.

## **COOKERS**

The provision of a cooker, whether free standing or built in, is the responsibility of the occupant including its maintenance and repair. If there is a built-in appliance already in place it will become your property to use, repair, maintain and replace if necessary during the occupancy.

When you install your own appliance, it is your responsibility to send the details of the fitting contractor to the Estates Department to confirm their fitness to undertake the works and to record what is being done for safety purposes. In the event of the installation being regarded as unsafe, when the property inspection takes place, repairs or replacement will be at your expense.

## **COUNCIL TAX**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Finance to meet the cost of Council Tax for you and family members in your home. You must always advise the Estates Secretary of changes in your household that impact on Council Tax.

(See also LODGERS and SUBLETTING.)

## **CRACKS**

As the regular occupier of the property you may notice cracks internally and externally and be aware of whether they are getting worse. Most hairline cracks, especially if they run in parallel with the walls and ceiling, are due to plaster shrinkage and can be dealt with during the course of redecoration. However, if you see one wider than a hairline that is changing or worsening, it is

important you contact the Estates Department for advice without delay. A photograph is particularly helpful. The surveyor can then decide on any necessary action.

### **CURTAINS, BLINDS, CURTAIN TRACKS AND FIXINGS**

The fitting of curtains, blinds and their tracks and fixings are the responsibility of the occupant. On departure these items may be left for the next occupant and if so, the Estates Department should be informed.

### **DOOR BELLS AND DOOR KNOCKERS**

The Estates Department will provide a door bell or a knocker if one is not already fitted.

### **DRAINS**

Drains and sewer systems that work properly are an essential part of maintaining a property as a safe and healthy environment for living. In order to keep them working well, you can help by:

- Avoiding pouring fatty substances or coffee grounds down the sink.
- Making sure that no forbidden substances are put into the drains that could enter water courses and be subject to action by the Environment Agency, for example oil or paint.

If you have a problem with the drains, please contact the Estates Department as soon as possible and it will advise on the action to be taken.

### **DUSTBINS**

The arrangements for dustbins and collections vary between local authorities. You are responsible for ensuring the necessary bins are at the property and that they are collected regularly so there is no accumulation of rubbish.

### **ELECTRICAL**

No electrical works should be carried out unless they are commissioned and monitored by the Estates Department.

A full electrical survey is normally carried out every ten years, i.e. at every other quinquennial inspection. If occupants have any particular worries they should contact the Estates Department.

### **ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

The Property Committee has an environmental strategy the principles of which are as follows:

- To reduce the negative impact of parsonages and corporate property on the environment;
- To be early adopters of proven good practice, as cost effectively as possible taking account of the balance between embodied energy costs and current usage;

- To develop a programme of reasonable measures to improve standards which would operate within the context of the existing programme of repairs, improvements and new building;
- To encourage occupiers to be more environmentally aware and act responsibly.

When implementing this strategy the Committee will always be mindful of the impact of any measures upon the occupiers of buildings and upon neighbours.

Priority is given to the prevention of heat loss. In particular, where practicable:

- Loft insulation will be increased to 270mm;
- Weather stripping to windows will be carried out;
- Double glazing will be installed when windows are replaced;
- Energy efficient doors will be provided when replacement is needed;
- Condensing boilers will be installed when replacement is required; and
- Cavity wall insulation will be installed.

The Property Committee will not normally expect to adopt the following measures:

- Solar panels for central heating
- Wind turbines
- Rain water harvesting except in the case of new construction (This is not the same as collecting rainwater in water butts, to which the Committee has no objection)
- Grey water recycling
- Ground source heat pumps
- Photovoltaic panels
- Air source heat pumps

## **EXTRACTORS**

If an extractor fan is provided in your kitchens you are expected to make sure dust and grime are removed from the cover and to provide replacement filters.

## **FENCES**

Suitable fencing will be provided by the Estates Department to divide the front garden from the back for the safety of you and any children. Fencing will not be provided for the protection of pets or animals.

## **FIRE SAFETY**

Since The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations came into effect on 1 October 2015, the Property Committee has taken over responsibility for fitting a smoke alarm on each storey of a house and a carbon monoxide detector in any room which contains an appliance which burns fuel such as coal or wood, but excluding gas or oil. Solid fuel burners and useable open fireplaces are regarded as such appliances. You should test the alarms at least once a month.

## **GARAGES AND PARKING**

The provision of garages and parking is dependent on the locality of the property. In urban areas it may not be possible to provide off-street parking, although every effort is made to do so.

## **GARDENS**

If your property has a garden, you are responsible for keeping it neat and tidy. This means cutting the lawns regularly, trimming hedges and shrubs and weeding flower beds, drives and paths.

Trees affect the condition of properties and their roots reach out underground as far as the branches do. These can pose a risk to building foundations. No tree should be planted within 12 metres of the house. If there are mature trees and they are overhanging public highways, presenting a risk to the building, or have become storm-damaged and dangerous, please consult the Estates Department who will appoint a contractor and secure the necessary local authority permissions.

Some trees are subject to a local Tree Preservation Order (TPO) which means that they may not be pruned or cut down without permission. In conservation areas, there may be restrictions on pruning and trimming shrubs and bushes. Ivy and creepers can damage the property by blocking gutters and ventilation. Please keep them trimmed and do not plant them near the property.

At no time should you put yourself or other occupants at risk by climbing ladders, using power saws or otherwise doing work which requires specialist knowledge.

## **GARDEN SHEDS, GREENHOUSES AND WATER BUTTS**

The Property Committee is not responsible for garden works and occupiers are expected to keep their gardens in good order. (Stipendiary clergy may be able to claim a tax concession on gardening costs if they complete their annual return and send it to the Church Commissioners.)

The Property Committee is not responsible for hedges, pruning of fruit trees or routine garden maintenance. The planting of trees is discouraged but if occupants wish to plant them they should be carefully sited and not in a position which is likely to threaten the structure of any building, wall or path. The local garden centre can probably recommend trees and shrubs which are appropriate for the size of garden. Vines and creepers should not be planted against buildings as they harm the fabric of the building and if left unchecked can interfere with gutters and roof tiles.

In some areas prior approval for works to trees from the local authority is required. If so, no work should be undertaken without this. Occupants are responsible for ensuring that all regulations are followed and are advised to consult the local arborist before undertaking any work to trees, particularly in Conservation Areas.

The Property Committee is also not responsible for the provision, maintenance or removal of garden sheds or greenhouses. You may install a garden shed, greenhouse or water butt at your own expense provided that you remove it when leaving the property unless agreed otherwise with the Estates Department.

Where a garage is removed to provide a study, provision of a shed will be considered.

## **GAS FIRES**

An alternative to central heating will normally be provided for your study. Gas checks are carried out annually and you are expected to provide access to contractors for this.

## **GAS LEAKS**

In the event of a suspected gas leak do not operate any electrical or switch device, in case of sparks, and make sure that there are no sources of flames anywhere. Open all windows and, if you can safely do so, turn the gas lever near the meter to the off position. Dial 0800 111 999 immediately and report the leak.

## **GUTTERS**

Clearance of gutters is your responsibility. Any repairs identified should be referred to the Estates Department.

## **HEDGES**

It is your responsibility to maintain and care for hedging.

## **INFESTATION – MICE, RATS AND OTHER VERMIN**

If you think that there is an infestation of mice, rats, wasps (nests), cockroaches or other pests, please notify the Estates Department immediately. If it becomes apparent that the nuisance is caused by poor home management, you may be liable for the costs of removal.

## **INSURANCE – BUILDINGS**

All parsonage houses are insured for their replacement value under a block policy held with the Ecclesiastical. Occupants are responsible for their own contents insurance and for occupant's liability and are strongly advised to ensure their cover is adequate. The choice of insurer for contents is entirely a matter for occupants but advice can be obtained from the Ecclesiastical which runs a special contents insurance scheme for the clergy. Please note that should additional security precautions be required because of the nature or value of the contents, the occupant will be expected to fund them.

All claims on the building insurance should be submitted through the Estates Department. It should be noted that:

- Insurers will expect two estimates for any repairs for which a claim is to be made, with the exception of urgent works which are required to make the property secure in the short term, i.e. overnight.
- Only claims for the replacement of existing fittings are acceptable, for example damaged locks should be replaced as existing and any improvement clearly itemised on the invoice. Insurers are not responsible for the payment of invoices relating to improved security.

- Malicious damage and break-ins should be reported to the police and the Estates Department informed of the station notified, the time and date of the incident and its circumstances.

If the claim arises from neglect, misuse or accidental damage by the occupants, they will be expected to pay for the repair or the insurance policy excess (currently £500) whichever is the lower.

## **INSURANCE – CONTENTS**

Occupants are responsible for their own contents insurance and for occupant's liability and are strongly advised to ensure their cover is adequate. The choice of insurer for contents is entirely a matter for occupants but advice can be obtained from the Ecclesiastical which runs a special contents insurance scheme for the clergy. Please note that should additional security precautions be required because of the nature or value of the contents, the occupant will be expected to fund them.

## **KITCHENS**

Subject to budgetary constraints and in line with the programme of inspections, kitchen units are replaced when they become worn out. Your ideas on the design will be carefully considered but the Property Committee will have the final decision.

Most kitchens have spaces for free-standing fridges freezers and other appliances, some have built-in appliances. These are maintained by you. If they become beyond repair, it is for you to provide yourself with replacements which are your property to take with you when you leave. Where appliances are not provided you must supply these yourself.

## **LETTINGS**

The Property Committee has a policy of trying to let empty houses on six month Assured Shorthold Tenancies. Where letting is possible, this is done with the agreement of the churchwardens. As most vacancies are at least six months, this does not delay a new appointment being made.

Letting the house removes the burden of looking after it from the churchwardens. It also provides income, the first call on which is for work to the house concerned with any surplus being paid into the Diocesan Stipends Fund to help meet the cost of clergy stipends.

It is helpful if an early decision on letting can be taken so that the letting agent can, if convenient, visit whilst the house is still occupied and marketing can start in good time.

## **LIGHT FITTINGS**

Light fittings are provided in each room, which means a cable and socket. Fitted lighting units, lightshades and lightbulbs are your responsibility.

## **LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS**

Many of the Board's properties are within conservation areas. This means that some things are not permitted in relation to the outside of the premises.

If the building that you live in is listed, there are additional restrictions on what can be done with the property in terms of maintenance and improvements. Some of the things that you would like to see done may not be permitted and some things have to be done to a required standard.

The Estates Department can advise you as to whether the property is affected and what this means for any proposals you may have for improvements. It will also advise on maintenance to the required standards.

## **LOCKS – DOORS AND WINDOWS**

The Board provides locks on all external doors and windows.

## **LODGERS**

The taking of lodgers is allowed but it should be understood that it will give rise to many practical and legal issues. You should always consult the Estates Department before taking on a lodger. (See also "SUBLETTING", below.)

## **LOFTS**

Great care should be taken in accessing the loft. The loft should not be used for general storage and should only contain a small number of items and they should not be of a nature to cause risk to people or property, such as flammable items like camping gas cartridges or items likely to leak and cause damage to ceilings or attract vermin.

Items should be arranged to spread their weight. You should avoid contact or inhalation of any insulating material in the loft and you should take care to use stable ladders and secure them when accessing the loft space.

## **MOVING IN**

Once you have a date for your installation or to move into the property, please arrange with the Estates Secretary and Churchwardens to meet with you at the property.

Once you move in, take meter readings and send these to the Estates Department.

## **MOVING OUT**

When you know the date on which you will be leaving the property, please contact the Estates Secretary who will arrange to visit and carry out an outgoing condition assessment.

It is your responsibility to leave the property in good order which means:

- It should be empty of all personal belongings, including in the loft and outbuildings
- It should be clean
- The garden should be tidy
- Any lodgers that you have had living in the property have left and taken all their belongings with them

If costs arise from having to carry out works to put the property in order or to remove rubbish and items remaining, the Estates Department reserves the right to pass on the costs for this to you.

You may make an agreement with the Estates Department to leave serviceable items for the new occupant, in which case you should provide them with a list clearly setting out what is remaining for this purpose.

You should arrange for the utility readings to be made and the final account to be issued to you for payment. Please suspend services where applicable rather than arranging for disconnection.

You should ensure that the following procedures are followed:

- A. Gas and electricity meters readings are provided to the utility companies and final bills for supplies up until departure paid or forwarded. The telephone company should also be informed and arrangements made for the payment of outstanding charges. The telephone should be diverted where possible and not be disconnected. The number should be retained unchanged.
- B. In respect of insurance cover for the escape of water or oil and the freezing of water, the water supply must be turned off at the mains and the heating system drained down, if you move out during the months of October to March unless there is an automatic central heating system in constant operation (including the water supply) which is set at a minimum temperature of 6 degrees centigrade. The loft hatch should also be left open to allow heat from the house to circulate. These measures should help ensure that no damage is caused should there be a sudden very cold spell and are preferable to draining down the system if the heating system permits. Draining down tends to make the house very unwelcoming and can lead to deterioration, especially where there are carpets.
- C. The Estates Department needs to know the date when the house is expected to become empty so that the relevant council tax authorities can be notified.
- D. The house should be left clean and empty of all rubbish and all personal possessions. It must not be assumed that the churchwardens will arrange for the clearance of unwanted items. If at the vacancy inspection carried out by the Archdeacon and the Estates Secretary it is discovered that the house has been left in an unacceptable condition and there are no overriding pastoral reasons for this, the Archdeacon may contact the outgoing occupant and request a financial contribution to meet the cost of any necessary remedial work. If payment is not made, the Board reserves the right to recover the cost of repairs through civil proceedings.
- E. Ensure that the Churchwardens are given a set of keys and that instructions are given to them for the use of alarms and other systems.

- F. During a vacancy the churchwardens are responsible for security and general caretaking in the parsonage house. They should be handed a letter from the Bishop in advance of a vacancy, advising what their responsibilities are in this regard.

## **PAINTING**

When painting walls and ceilings, please do not use bold colours. These are expensive to cover up.

## **PETS**

Pets may be kept in the house and garden but you are expected to exercise common sense about the effects of your choice of animals on the condition and maintenance of the property and relationships with neighbours.

You are responsible for providing any additional fencing that is required to keep the pets within the garden and any damage to the fabric of the property or the garden will be repaired at your expense.

You will need the permission of the Estates Department to fit a cat/dog flap and this will normally be granted provided that you agree to reinstate doors to their original condition prior to leaving the property.

## **PONDS**

You are not encouraged to create them in gardens as they can be a safety hazard.

## **RIGHTS OF WAY**

The law relating to rights of way is complicated and it is important to prevent the unintentional creation of a right of way by allowing the public to cross the property regularly over a period of years, other than in using the appointed route to the front door.

If you are concerned that long term use of a route across the property by the public may be creating a right of way, please contact the Estates Department immediately.

## **SATELLITE DISHES AND TV AERIALS**

You are responsible for these and you may fit a satellite dish at your own expense.

## **SEPTIC TANKS AND SEWERAGE**

The Property Committee is responsible for the septic tank and any problems that arise with its maintenance.

## **PARISH OFFICES AND MEETING ROOMS**

The use of the property for parish offices and meeting rooms must not be granted without the written permission of the Board of Finance.

Your home has a study for the purpose of private meetings, devotions and study. This room should be well separated from domestic parts of house and directly accessible from entrance lobby or start of inner hall.

## **SHELVING**

The Estates Department will supply up to 30 metres of shelving for books and this must remain behind when you leave the property. You may add other shelving at your own expense but you must take advice from the Estates Department about fitting items to the walls to avoid damaging cabling and plasterwork. If you remove these you must make good the any damage.

## **SHOWERS**

Many properties already have showers fitted. Please contact the Estates Department which will advise on the provision of showers.

## **SUBLETTING OF PROPERTY**

Only Lodgers are allowed and this must be done in consultation with the Estates Department.

You are also strongly advised to seek the advice of an accountant and solicitor before entering into any agreement.

Clergy other than incumbents/priests-in-charge require the written permission of the Estates Department before agreeing to take in lodgers. Some properties (particularly those rented rather than owned by the DBF) may be subject to legal restrictions in this regard.

Any agreement regarding lodgers shall be subject to the matters outlined in the guidance on lodgers available from the Estates Department.

Any arrangement must terminate upon the date that you cease to be the occupant and all lodgers must vacate the building fully before you leave.

## **TELEPHONE**

The PCC is responsible for providing you with a telephone line and point for the better performance of your duties. Additional lines must be provided at your own expense.

The bill is your responsibility but PCCs are encouraged to meet the expense of calls made in the course of your duties.

## **TREES**

Where trees threaten the structure of buildings or overhang public highways the Diocese may meet all or part of the cost of the necessary pruning works. Please contact the Estates Department for advice.

## **WALLS**

See Boundaries

## **WASHING MACHINES**

Plumbing for a washing machine is supplied as standard. If there is a fitted washing machine you may use and maintain it but replacement and repair is your responsibility.

## **WATER BUTTS**

You may install a water butt at your own expense provided that you remove it when leaving the property unless agreed otherwise with the Estates Department.

## **WATER CHARGES**

The DBF is responsible for the water charges for clergy housing.

## **WINDOWS – REPLACEMENT**

Diocesan properties have a very diverse range of window design and construction and some properties have restrictions on what can be done because of listing or conservation issues.

Any requests will be considered within the limits of what can be achieved both financially and practically.

## **WOODBLOCK FLOORING**

The sanding polishing and staining of woodblock flooring is your responsibility. The repair of any wear or damage should be arranged by the Estates Department.