



# Diocese of Newcastle



## A GUIDE FOR THOSE ABOUT TO LEAVE A PARSONAGE OR DIOCESAN HOUSE

**'The Houses & Glebe Committee share in supporting clergy  
and their families through the maintenance and care of  
their home in the mission and ministry of the Church'**

### Introduction

We wish you well in your forthcoming move and have prepared this leaflet to provide useful information about vacating your present home and what needs to be considered. There is a separate leaflet which is issued to your Churchwardens which provides further information about what needs to be done when a house becomes vacant.

By no means is this information exhaustive and you may have a number of questions which are not answered in this leaflet. Please call Church House for any queries or concerns that you may have and we will endeavour to help.

### What do I need to do?

The principle factors that need to be considered in preparation for your move are as follows: **P.R.E.P.A.R.E :**



## Property Information

Please help us collect more detailed information on your present home. We need to improve our database and more importantly prepare a detailed property record for your prospective successor. We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as we hear that you are moving. The Property Manager will visit to ask some questions, check room dimensions and take photographs where possible.

In order to assess how well the house functions as a family home and its use as a vicarage (or diocesan property) we would be very grateful if you could complete the enclosed feedback questionnaire. This information forms part of our assessment on how suitable the property is.

If there are any particular idiosyncrasies with the house, historical problems or repairs please let us know.



## Removals

If your new role is within the diocese and you will be moving into a new vicarage or diocesan house then all removal costs will be paid for by the diocese. Please obtain three quotes and pass the details over to Gillian Green who works in the Accounts Department at Church House. It is advisable to get the contractors to visit so they can determine the scale of the job thus avoiding any future problems. Please obtain a quote from Pickfords as they have a discounted rate with the diocese 0800 212 155.

If you are starting a new clerical post in another diocese you will obviously need to contact their diocesan office for more details. For retiring clergy the Pensions Board are the first contact who will be able to provide advice on any possible grants which may be available.

Please contact Church House as soon as you know your actual moving out date.



## Empty & Clean

We are very grateful for all those that have left parsonages or diocesan houses in a clean and empty condition. Occasionally we have needed to instruct a cleaner or had to organise for the disposal of unwanted furniture. Please leave the house empty and clean and in a suitable condition for your successor.

I am sure you will understand that we need to seek reimbursement from those that leave houses in a dirty condition or have left unwanted items. In all such circumstances the Archdeacon will be consulted.

During your time in the parish you may have agreed with the PCC to store some of their furniture and equipment in the vicarage, garage, outbuilding etc. It is important that any successor does not feel pressured into inheriting the same arrangement. Consequently, when the house becomes vacant all parish items will need to be removed and stored elsewhere.

Please inform the PCC well in advance of your moving out date so they can make alternative arrangements.

It is understood that PCC lawnmowers and gardening equipment has to be stored in the garage/shed to enable the parish to manage the grounds during the vacancy.



## Protection

Please help us keep the property secure as any house which is left empty will be vulnerable to vandalism, break-ins and arson. In addition, there is a risk of damage being caused from any defect which is not noticed straight away e.g pipework leaking. There are a number of measures which will reduce the risk of incidents occurring:

### Post

Post building up at the front door is an obvious sign that a house is empty. Please make arrangements to have the post picked up on a regular basis or provide a forwarding address to the Post Office. The easiest way to do the latter is to use the online redirection facility, to be found at

<http://www.postoffice.co.uk>

### Lighting

Most houses will have external security lighting around the perimeter of the property. It is essential that the power is left on at all times to ensure the lights operate after your move. It is advisable that you explain to your Churchwardens how it operates especially if there is a separate control switch. If there are any lights which do not work please inform Church House.

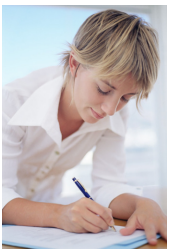
### Alarm and Keys

Every house will have an intruder alarm installed which should be switched on when the house is empty. Please provide us with the code and also show your Churchwardens how the system can be set on and off, providing any user manuals if possible. It is essential that the electricity supply is maintained to enable the alarm to work; the battery pack will only have a very short life expectancy.

Please provide a full set of keys to the diocese and any others to your Churchwardens. You should have received a key fob, envelope, tags and instructions with this leaflet. If there are any keys which are missing please let the Houses Department know as soon as possible, this includes any window keys.

### Services

Please leave the central heating on at a low level during autumn and winter as this will reduce the risk of faults occurring in the system and the likelihood of condensation and damp problems. The Churchwardens will be asked if they would be willing to drain down the domestic water supply after you have vacated.



## Assured Shorthold Tenancy

Often a tenant will be sought to occupy a house (for a short period) as soon as it becomes empty. The arrangement will be under a six month Assured Shorthold Tenancy.

We ask that if the house is going to be placed on the rental market that you allow for the letting agent, Smiths Gore to attend the outgoing meeting with the Property Manager so they can prepare the particulars. If possible, we ask that you will allow any prospective tenant have a look around the house prior to your moving out date. We respect that this is a busy period and if you would prefer to have Smith Gore meet the prospective tenants and show them around or would prefer us to wait until you have vacated, please let us know.



## Recarpeting

At the outgoing meeting with the Property Manager we will agree with you which carpets you are going to leave and which ones you are removing. We would ask that you remove any existing carpets which are in a particularly poor condition or any that you think your successor would not wish to use.

If a house has been identified for letting during the vacancy there is a possibility that we would need to recarpet some of those rooms where there will be no floor covering in place after you leave.

The Property Manager will discuss with you whether you would like to accept a small reimbursement for any existing carpets that you would otherwise wish to use again in your next home. We will not be able to consider reimbursing you for every carpet and it does not include the hall, landing and stairs. Any reimbursement is on condition that we are able to obtain a tenant during the vacancy so we can use this rental income to pay you. In some houses the PCC may have paid for carpets and as such these should be left in the house for your successor.



## Expense

To avoid any misunderstanding please make a record of the gas and electricity meter readings on the day of your move. Keep a record of the readings and also pass the figures to the churchwardens and to the Houses Department. As previously stated, the heating should be left on a low level in the autumn and winter months. The electricity should not be switched off so the security lighting and alarm can work.

It would be very helpful to remind the PCC that they will be responsible for stopping the Council Tax, your Churchwardens will be sent information regarding this. In addition, the PCC will need to pay for the small amount of heating, electricity and also make arrangements for the telephone line as follows:

- Contact BT (or other company) on 0800 800 150 to make arrangements for their 'Caller Redirect' service. Caller redirect will allow calls to be redirected to someone else in the parish e.g churchwarden or parish office.
- This arrangement will cost the parish approximately £10 per month. BT offer a 3, 6 or 12 month contract and you will need to decide what your preferred option is. Most parishes agree a 3 month contract and renew when needed.
- If the house is let the tenant will have the use of the line but require a different telephone number. The tenant will be charged for the standard line rental and calls.
- When the house is reoccupied by a member of clergy you will need to cancel the 'Caller Redirect' service and BT will provide a stop order reference.

If the house is let meter readings will be taken by the new tenant and all future costs will be their responsibility.

## Thanks

Thank you for your co-operation, work and time in undertaking these duties and for your care of the house over the years. The Houses & Glebe Committee would like to wish you every blessing for your forthcoming move and hope that you will easily settle into your new home.

If there are any concerns or queries please contact the Houses Department overleaf for further information. Although we are unable to fulfil every wish we will endeavour to provide as much support and help as possible.

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