



DIOCESE OF
BATH & WELLS

Changing Lives, Changing Churches for Changing Communities

HOUSING GUIDE



October 2010

DIOCESAN HANDBOOK
Housing Guide A-Z

Updated October 2010

The opportunity has been taken to further clarify points of policy. The “Care of a Parsonage House at vacancy” document has also been adapted.

Would you please arrange for past copies to be destroyed, one copy to be kept in Vestry or Parish Office and a copy to each Churchwarden.

Mrs S Prothero
Property Representative, Finance Group

UPDATED October 2010

This guide has been prepared to enable occupants to resolve queries about housing issues generally and will be used by Diocesan staff to ensure consistency and fairness in the application of the resources available for maintenance and improvement work.

Any queries that cannot be resolved after reference to this document should be addressed, in the first instance, to the Property Department at the Diocesan Office:

The Old Deanery	Office hours	9 a.m. to 5.15 pm.
Wells		9 a.m. to 5 pm (Fridays)
Somerset		
BA5 2UG		

Tel:	01749 670777
Fax:	01749 676142 (property department only)
Email:	general@bathwells.anglican.org
Web site:	http://www.bathwells.anglican.org

Paul Toseland	Head of Property, Diocesan Surveyor	Ext 242
Penny Cooke	Property Officer	Ext 243
Debbie Simmonds	Personal Assistant	Ext 240
Ali Walker	Personal Assistant	Ext 244

It is requested that non-urgent enquiries be submitted in writing, preferably by email.

Where a deviation from the policy contained in this manual is requested, reference should be made to the Archdeacon whose active support will be required for the proposal before it is brought before the Finance Group. Full details of the group membership will be included in the Diocesan Directory.

Alterations to this policy may be approved without prior notice and revisions will be distributed to all occupants on an annual basis.

These guidelines apply to all Benefice Houses and Team Vicarages.

Note: Due to the nature of property owned or purchased for Curates some variations to the handbook may be required. Any clarification required should be sought from the Diocesan Surveyor.

FINANCE GROUP (Parsonages Board)

MISSION STATEMENT

The Aim is to support the Clergy and their families with accommodation appropriate to their needs and, as far as possible, to relieve them of domestic concerns in order that they may concentrate upon their Pastoral responsibilities.

The Finance Group undertakes to:

- i. **Provide** suitable houses by building, purchase or improvement.
- ii. **Sell** unsuitable houses or those which are surplus to requirements as a result of Pastoral re-organisation.
- iii. **Repair** the existing housing stock in accordance with statutory requirements.

The Finance Group undertakes to:

Manage the glebe in a manner that maximises income in order to support Ministry, whilst preserving the long-term capital value of the portfolio for future generations.

BATH & WELLS HOUSING POLICY

Absence

Insurance cover is automatically restricted under the Diocesan block policy if the house is left inadequately furnished for occupation for more than 30 consecutive days. It is virtually impossible to maintain full cover during a vacancy and special instructions are given to Sequestrators to minimise the risk of uninsured loss. A copy of the letter to sequestrators for “care of Parsonage Houses during a vacancy” is included in the Appendix section. The risk is reduced under the current policy to let.

See also Insurance, Vacancy.

Alarm Systems

When a house is considered to be very vulnerable the Finance Group may offer assistance, together with making an application for a grant from Marshall's Charity (current level £250). A local contribution will also be required. As a guide, this is approximately £425 on current prices. It is the Finance group policy for the occupant to pay annual maintenance plus repair costs as the main purpose is to protect the occupants' contents. Incumbents should refer requests to the Diocesan Surveyor who will arrange for quotations from approved companies, and agree the specification requirements. You may benefit in some instances with reduced insurance premiums. **See also Security.**

Alterations

Any alterations to benefice property require the prior consent of the

The Finance Group and details should be provided before undertaking the work.

Animals

Pets may be kept in the house or garden but clergy are expected to exercise common sense in their choice of animals with particular regard for the maintenance of the property and relations with neighbours. The Finance Group is not responsible for providing additional fencing or otherwise improving the boundaries of the garden to prevent domestic animals escaping. Any pet damage to doors/walls etc will be the responsibility of the incumbent and will be chargeable if the Finance Group carries out the repair.

Bathrooms

Existing bathroom suites will not be replaced unless they are considered unusable or may be more sensibly replaced than repaired. Replacement suites will normally be in white or cream to make matching easier and to leave future clergy a neutral colour scheme. A programme of modernisation is in hand.

Bats

All incumbents in houses with bat colonies should notify the Diocesan Surveyor immediately. All species are protected and fines for disturbance of colonies for whatever reason will be high, and specialist advice is needed.

Boilers

Annual servicing and repairs are funded and arranged by the Finance Group. When a boiler is beyond economic repair consideration will be given to a replacement. Factors such as installation charges and running costs will be taken into account before a decision is reached to change fuel source. See also **Gas** - safety and servicing (currently undertaken by : K & S Harris Heating (Mr Keith Harris and Mr Ali Amghar)Office telephone no – 01458 – 832152

Emergency boiler breakdown – Ali Amghar 07810 - 353150

Boundaries

Care should be taken to ensure that no encroachment occurs onto or from the property. Please address all queries on boundaries to the Property Department. Legislation is now in place due to the Party Wall Act, see also **Walls, Ivy**.

Burglaries

In the event of a burglary the clergy should notify the police without delay and contact the Property Department at the earliest opportunity. Urgent repairs may be undertaken such as the boarding up or re-glazing to prevent further loss or damage. All accounts should be forwarded to the Diocesan Office who will submit an Insurance claim for damage to the property in appropriate cases. The clergy should notify their own insurers regarding any loss or damage to contents.

See also Emergency repairs, Insurance.

Carpets

The Finance Group does not provide carpets to bedrooms. Vinyl flooring will be provided to the kitchen, utility room, bathroom and WC. Where carpets are purchased with a new house they will be left for the benefit of future clergy, but not replaced at a future date. The Finance Group will not involve itself in negotiations for carpets left behind by outgoing clergy. In some circumstances it may be negotiated if the property is to be let. **See woodblock flooring**

Category 'C'

Houses are those that are overlarge or old and the Finance Group have listed as unsuitable, in need of replacement. It is likely that improvement work will be restricted and PCC's/Incumbents should be aware of the status and the likelihood of plans to replace them at the next vacancy.

Central Heating

Central Heating fuelled by Gas or Oil is provided as standard, and heating sources are subject to modernisation as part of a works programme.

However due to escalating fuel costs electricity may be considered in some cases (2008)

See also boilers

Chimneys

Sweeping solid fuel use chimneys and removing obstructions such as Birds' nests is the responsibility of the clergy and should be undertaken at least annually, and before a house is vacated. Cleaning of gas flues comes under regulations and will be part of the Gas Safety arrangements paid for by the Diocese.

Conservatories

If the Diocesan Surveyor does not list these as superfluous building under the measure they shall be maintained as part of the structure. If they are deemed superfluous the Diocese will pay for removal and making good only. Conservatories will not generally be considered for provision.

See also Garden Sheds, Greenhouses

Consultation

The occupiers of houses will be consulted before improvements or major repairs are carried out. Incumbents have a legal right to refuse alterations with which they do not agree, though

they cannot impose their alternate preference on the Finance Group.

Cookers updated September 2010

The provision and repair of all cookers is the responsibility of the occupant including built in appliances. Any built in oven, hob or other white goods will become the property of the occupant free of charge with them having responsibility to repair or replace.

The surveyor MAY arrange for removal of fixed items if the circumstances permit in order to provide a space sufficient for a free standing cooker 600mm wide.

All cookers should be installed by a suitably qualified contractor, gas safety registered for gas or NICEIC/Part P registered for electric, at the expense of the occupant and certification sent to the property office. If annual inspections show faults on the appliances these will be red labelled by the inspecting contractor and repairs or replacement will be the responsibility of the occupant.

Range cookers may be fitted by incumbents who will be responsible for all costs involved, and all costs in involved in making good after removal. Consent will need to be given by the Diocesan Surveyor, all certification provided, with a written undertaking to make good on departure. Please be warned that costs may be very high as units, tiling and flooring may be obsolete and thus a whole kitchen replacement required on departure.

Council Tax

The Finance Group is responsible for all charges. Any communication received should be forwarded directly to the Diocesan Office for reply. Clergy are asked to notify the Diocesan Office of any changes in circumstance which may affect the level of Council tax due, i.e. single occupancy, disability etc.

Cracks

Cracks in plaster are usually due to shrinkage and should be dealt with as part of the internal redecoration. Cracks which appear to be structural (e.g. in brick or stonework, or of a greater than normal width, usually appearing on both the inner and outer faces of the wall) may be due to subsidence and should be reported to the Diocesan Office without delay. The Surveyor may choose to carry out additional plaster repairs if

necessary. **See also Decorations - internal.**

Curtains and Blinds

These are all the responsibility of the clergy to provide and maintain.

Curtains (Showers)

The Finance Group will provide shower curtain rails over baths as standard, not screens.

Shower curtains are the responsibility of the clergy and are to be provided to all shower installations and must be long enough to draw inside the bath or shower tray when in use.

Curtain tracks or Poles

Provided as standard. The Finance Group will replace broken or defective track but will not undertake to replace such items for cosmetic reasons.

Day to day repairs

Even with simple day to day repairs it is requested that the Property Department be notified of all problems. Arrangements can then be made locally, or a contractor sent by the Diocese to make the appropriate inspection or repair, or indeed the Surveyor may wish to assess the remedy required. This will enable the Surveyor to record the cost for budgetary purposes, and ensure the problem is not more serious than thought. This is intended to remove the need for clergy to stand costs over a reasonable period, and to give an accurate picture of true housing costs.

Decorations External

The Finance Group is responsible and will arrange approved contractors and tenders so as to undertake such works when required. A copy of the specification will be provided to each incumbent. **See also Quinquennial**

Decorations Internal

A grant of £60 per annum is available for materials only. Receipts should be sent to the Diocesan Office (Property Department) for reimbursement. At the discretion of the Diocesan Surveyor and, subject to finance availability, additional assistance may be available for larger properties towards difficult parts of a house such as hall stairs landings and high ceilings. This will be limited and unlikely to include all labour costs. New incumbents are responsible for internal redecoration labour. The Archdeacons request that parishes assist

where possible.

Decoration Exceptions

The Finance Group **may** provide additional funds for hall stair landings in very large Category 'C' houses, or 3 storey properties. This will be in the form of a Grant, possibly up to 50% of the cost.

Departure

The Finance Group **may** purchase carpets for letting purposes only and reimburse an incumbent for any works carried out at his own expense. However this is better agreed and confirmed in writing at the time approval is given for the work. Clergy are expected to leave the homes in good order. Houses should not be left dirty or in need of urgent redecoration. All personal possessions should be removed from the house (including the loft and all outbuildings) by the agreed vacancy date. Keys should be left with the Sequestrators and the keyholders notified to the Property Department. Arrangements should be made for the electricity and gas meters to be read and a final account requested from the telephone company. **Services should not be disconnected but suspended pending reoccupation or transferred to the P.C.C.**

Please contact the Diocesan Surveyor in good time prior to vacation to arrange an outgoing assessment, and record any problems with the property. The Finance Group reserves the right to charge for outgoing works resulting from negligence or poor upkeep.

Disability

The parsonage is considered a domestic dwelling with public access by invitation. The Disabled Discrimination Act will be complied with where reasonable, if there are specific disabled family requirements. Otherwise a gradual change and upgrade will be attempted if possible.

Dishwashers

Where required plumbing connections for dishwashers will be provided as standard. If built

in white goods are in the house at purchase the Finance Group will **NOT** be responsible for maintenance or replacement.

Door bells/door knockers

The Finance Group will provide either a doorbell or a door knocker if neither is yet fitted. Security intercoms or musical chimes are not provided. Alternative chimes can be provided for work/family.

Drives and paths

Although clergy are responsible for the maintenance of their gardens, the Finance Group checks the condition of drives and pathways as part of the Quinquennial survey. Necessary repairs will be carried out, however, clergy are requested to help control costs by keeping drives and paths free from weeds.

Dustbins

These are the responsibility of the clergy.

Electrical

Electrical tests and wiring are the responsibility of the Finance Group. DIY electrical work is strongly discouraged and only NICEIC registered contractors should be invited to undertake work on the property. Part P Certification is required in all kitchen and bathroom work. Checks will be carried out by the Diocese by recommendation of the Surveyor in the year of the Quinquennial or as appropriate.

Emergency repairs

In the case of real emergencies i.e. fire or flood, authority is given to take immediate action to reduce further damage. The Diocesan Surveyor should be contacted at the earliest possible date, and the appropriate Archdeacon informed. Problems may involve an insurance claim, and urgent remedial action, preceded by a visit of the Surveyor. During longer holidays when the office is closed, other day-to-day repairs can be carried out and claimed if they are interrupting the normal use of the house only.

Extractors

Extractor fans are sometimes provided in kitchens and bathrooms where condensation problems are considered to be sufficiently serious. Servicing will be Diocesan responsibility, upon advice by the user.

Fences (not Boundary)

Fencing within the boundaries of the garden e.g. to divide the front from the rear garden may be erected at the discretion of the Finance Group if it is deemed necessary for the safety of young children or for the general security or privacy of the property. This will not be carried out for animal enclosure.

Fences

Maintenance and repair is the responsibility of the Finance Group unless the boundary belongs to a neighbouring property. The minimum standard to be achieved is a fence capable of keeping small children within the garden under normal supervision. Fences do not need to be designed to keep domestic animals within the garden. Boundary fences of houses bordering agricultural fields will need to be stock proof, and, under Common Law, the Finance Group will require the adjoining owner to provide the necessary fencing. Clergy are requested not to plant trees and shrubs in such a position that they are likely to damage fences or obstruct access for maintenance purposes, and are requested to remove self set bushes and Ivy before it becomes established.

Finance Group

The Finance Group (Parsonages Board) meets regularly and is charged with the responsibility for the provision of suitable Parsonages & Team Vicarages and the management of the glebe portfolio. Day to Day management is the responsibility of the Diocesan Surveyor under the terms of the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972.

Fire Safety

The Finance Group provide as standard two smoke detectors for each property. Provision of new batteries is the responsibility of the clergy, but replacement or repair is the responsibility of the Diocese. Modernisation to electrical systems will be a gradual quinquennial process.

Fridges & Freezers

Spaces will be provided for freestanding appliances where practical. Built in appliances are to the benefit of the occupier and maintenance and replacement will be the responsibility of the incumbent.

Garages/parking

A Parsonage will normally have a garage but this is not possible in all cases. The Finance Group is not obliged to provide parking for second cars, caravans or boats.

Garden Sheds

These are the responsibility of the clergy, unless the house is deemed to lack green guide storage areas. This will always be at the discretion of the surveyor.

Gardens

These are the responsibility of the clergy. **See also Drives and Paths.** The PCC are requested to assist during the vacancy and letting arrangements may determine the need.

Gas- Connection

A gas connection may be installed when an opportunity arises, but a boiler will not necessarily be installed as a matter of course. Gas fuel bills are the responsibility of the clergy. **See also Boilers, Vacancy - bills**

Gas - safety & servicing

The Diocesan Property Department operate a 3 Star bulk servicing arrangement and the contractor will contact the occupant to organise this annually. The remit includes a gas safety check and servicing of gas fires. Please do not arrange for independent servicing. This will not be reimbursed as there will still need to be a gas Safety Certificate issued by our own contractor, who will need to service the boiler again to comply with the Gas Safety Standard regulations. The contract covers all aspects, including labour and materials.

Glebe

The legislation governing the sale (or lease) of glebe is the Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976 which came into effect on the 1st April 1978 and transferred into Diocesan ownership all glebe property which had hitherto vested in the Incumbents of Benefices. **All enquiries relating to glebe should be referred to the Diocesan Property Officer.**

Green Guide Standards

The Church Commissioners 'Green Guide' is a design guide for newly built houses and - where possible - the Finance Group tries to bring all existing houses to a good standard. However financial pressures and the nature of some properties restrict the ability of the Finance Group to achieve this aim in all cases. Green Guide standards should therefore be regarded as advisory rather than mandatory.

Greenhouses

These are never provided or maintained by the Finance Group. Existing items are to the benefit of the clergy, and can be removed without consent.

Gutters

Physical repairs and maintenance are the responsibility of the Finance Group but clergy are asked to assist by having leaves and other debris cleared every Autumn. Reimbursement of up to £50 will be given for this if carried out by a local tradesman.

Heating

An additional heating appliance may be provided in the Study, in addition to the central heating system. Houses without these will be considered during the Quinquennial programme, if felt suitable.

Hedges

These are the responsibility of the clergy. The Finance Group may be prepared to undertake work to tall beech or coniferous hedges as part of the quinquennial, but clergy are expected to trim all hedges on a regular basis to avoid the need for costly work. If in doubt the Property Department should be consulted. Once major topping has been carried out trimming reverts to the Incumbent. The Surveyor may refuse support if any neglect is obvious. **See also Gardens, Trees**

Improvements

The Finance Group is aware of the need to maintain the standard of, and modernise Parsonage houses. Funds for this work are limited and local assistance would be welcomed. Planned improvements will be incorporated into the Quinquennial. These will be submitted to the Finance Group for consideration. If the proposed work is acceptable, when funding is available then the Diocesan Surveyor will obtain estimates for the work. Improvements will be listed and prioritised during a financial year, or future years, dependant on budgetary conditions. **See also Alterations.**

Infestation

Infestation by mice, rats, wasps, flies or other pests should be reported at the earliest opportunity to the Diocesan Office. The Diocesan Surveyor will arrange for appropriate action to be taken. **See also Emergency works & Bats**

Insulation

Cavity wall insulation is provided as standard in all properties where the construction permits and most houses have it installed already. Loft insulation and lagging are provided as standard. Where standards are increased by legislation the Diocesan Surveyor will consider the need to upgrade, funds permitting.

Insurance and buildings

All properties are insured by the Finance Group for a wide variety of perils for public liability. The possibility of a claim is considered whenever damage to a property is reported however it is not considered worth submitting claims unless the loss is at least £25 more than the relevant excess of £250. **See also Vacancy insurance**

Insurance - contents

The clergy are responsible for insuring their own contents against loss or damage, to include all carpeting inherited from previous occupants.

Ivy

The removal of longstanding Ivy growth from boundary walls and house walls can often destabilise them leading to costly repair bills. Guidance should be sought from the Diocesan Office or the matter discussed with the Diocesan Surveyor at the quinquennial survey before undertaking such work.

Occupants are requested not to plant or set ivy to grow up buildings or walls or any kind of creeper, ornamental, or not, and keep trimmed any existing. This cost is the responsibility of the occupant not the Board.

Keys

During a vacancy keys will normally be held by the Sequestrators. A further set is to be despatched to the Diocesan Office. Letting procedures will be notified by the Property Officer.

Kitchens

Kitchen units are normally replaced only when they are considered to be unusable and are beyond economic repair. Replacement schemes will be considered during occupancy, in the right circumstances. Incumbents will have an input in design but the Surveyor reserves the right to overrule this.

Legal obligations (Clergy)

The Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 gives the Finance Group a responsibility to ensure that essential work is carried out and to seek compensation from the Incumbent if it considers repairs to be "necessary by reason of damage caused or aggravated by any deliberate act of the Incumbent...or any default in his duties under (the Measure)..." (Sect.13 (4)).

Lettings

It is now the Finance Group's policy to let as many properties at vacancy as possible to reduce Common Fund increases. The Property Officer will advise outgoing Incumbents and PCC's of procedures.

Listed Buildings

Where a building is listed no structural alteration may be carried out without the prior consent of the Diocesan Office.

Locks - Door

The Finance Group will provide 5 lever external locks as standard. The Diocesan Surveyor to decide upon manufacturer.

Locks - Window

The Finance Group will provide good quality locks as standard to all accessible windows , unless style of window prohibits fitting.

Lofts

Items may be stored in the loft if flooring is provided, but it is important that the loft is not overloaded and that the weight of stored items is spread as evenly as possible. A loft ladder and light will be provided as standard. If no boarding is provided, this will be considered during the Quinquennial programme as an improvement.

Maintenance (Minor)

Clergy are expected to carry out minor maintenance tasks if they feel competent to help protect their houses and keep the Finance Group's costs to a minimum.

Oil Boiler Service

The Diocesan Property Department operates a bulk servicing arrangement and the contractor will contact the occupant to organise this annually. Please do not arrange for independent servicing. This will not be reimbursed as there will still need to be a service by our own contractor. The contract covers servicing, inspection of oil tanks, pipework, fire valves etc. Repairs may result from inspection which will be financed by the Board.

Parish Offices/Meeting Rooms

It is **not** the function of the Finance Group to provide additional accommodation within the Parsonage House for Parish use. An Incumbent or Team Vicar should not make any arrangements for use of or access over any part of the Parsonage House without prior reference to the Diocesan Office. This is intended to avoid unintentionally binding a successor into an arrangement which may not be suitable for his or her style of Ministry. PCC's will be expected to remove records, photocopiers kept in the house if let at vacancy.

Planning applications

The Finance Group will investigate the implications of planning applications concerning neighbouring properties and object if the proposed changes could be detrimental to the residents of the Parsonage. It is essential that the clergy advise the Diocesan Office if an application has been submitted.

Quinquennial surveys

A survey will be made every five years by the Diocesan Surveyor to ensure that the property is fully maintained and repair/preventative maintenance carried out as necessary. The occupier of each property is asked to comment on the survey before work is organized by the Diocesan Surveyor subject to The Finance Group approval. The clergy may make representations to the Finance Group if they consider that the schedule does not cover all necessary work. Improvements will be listed but subject to finances being available. Repairs will be carried out in line with the measure.

Removals/ Resettlement

Administered by Accounts Department.

Rights of Way

Clergy are asked to ensure that members of the public are not able to cross their gardens regularly over a period of years other than in using the appointed route to the front door. Long term use may establish rights of way by prescription.

Rotary washing Line

Provided as standard.

Rubbish

It is the responsibility of departing clergy to ensure that rubbish and unwanted possessions are removed from all parts of the house and garden. Charges will be made when not complied with.

Security

Clergy are expected to exercise care in order to minimise risk of burglary (e.g. by locking windows, joining Neighbourhood Watch schemes where they exist). Window locks and 5 lever door locks are provided as standard. The Finance Group will normally respond promptly to security recommendations made by EIG's Surveyor.

See also Alarms, Fire safety, Locks- door, Locks - windows.

Security - lighting

If you are advised that this could be an effective deterrent the Finance Group are normally prepared to offer a grant towards a suitable installation. Replacement of bulbs is considered to be the responsibility of the clergy. The Surveyor will endeavour to assess requirements at survey.

For details of the current grant available see Appendix A.

Sewerage

The Finance Group is responsible for all charges. Any communication received should be forwarded directly to the Diocesan Office for reply. **See Septic Tanks**

Shaver point

At least 1No, provided as standard.

Shaving mirror

Provided as standard in bathrooms, or over basins.

Septic tanks

Problems with these should be notified to the Surveyor, emptying payments are the responsibility of the Diocese. Incumbents should monitor and arrange emptying.

Shelving

The Finance Group will provide fitted shelves in the study to a maximum of 30 metres or to a shorter length by agreement or according to the size and shape of the study. The clergy may otherwise add shelving at their own expense, but should take care when fitting shelves not to damage features electrical cables etc.

Showers

Consideration will be given to the installation of showers. The initial preferred type of shower is the bath/mixer with shower attachment as this requires the least maintenance. However, where this is impractical the installation of an electrically heated shower unit would be acceptable. Best practice for shower provision will always be considered, including cubicles if deemed appropriate. All electrical contractors for bathrooms must be Part 'P' approved. The Diocesan Surveyor will arrange for the work to be carried out. **See also Tiling - showers, Curtains - showers**

Shower Screens (to Baths)

If the clergy chose to fit these it must be with the Surveyor's approval and at their own expense.

Standard Items

Items listed in this paper as "provided as standard" are included in new properties or added during quinquennial surveys or at vacancy. In appropriate cases they may be provided as extra items on request.

Storm and other damage

See **Emergency repair**. For damage to garden plants and fixture see other entries concerning responsibility for these items.

Study Accommodation

The current **Green Guide standard** is 220 square feet or 200 square feet if alternative storage for equipment and vestments is provided elsewhere. The standard is applied to all new Parsonages but existing studies are often too small or poorly designed. It is not always possible to rectify such deficiencies.

Taps

Under the DDA (2004) tap heads and shower controls will gradually be replaced with lever types as they are repaired.

Telephone Points

A telephone point is provided as standard in the study with a second point for family use elsewhere on the ground floor. Other extensions (e.g. in a bedroom) may be fitted at the expense of the clergy. The basic cost of telephone installation is paid for by the Finance Group but quarterly bills are the responsibility of the Clergy. The Finance Group are only responsible for a single line.

Television Aerials

For insurance purposes a TV aerial is considered a Benefice fixture and fitting therefore the Diocese will provide and maintain the basic requirements. Clergy wishing to site satellite dishes on the outside of their houses should first consult the Finance Group, particularly if the property is listed. Planning consent is often required for those. Insurance liability is that of the clergy.

Tenancies See Vacancy – lettings

Tiling

The Finance Group specifies tiles in neutral colours which will be used in kitchens and bathrooms when replacement is required. Clergy may be offered a limited choice within a chosen range but not outside it. Neutral colours have been chosen to avoid problems caused by widely differing tastes which might otherwise lead to expensive retiling and difficulties in matching other fixtures and fittings. In some cases where tiles do not match tile paint may be used to avoid expensive replacement.

Tiling – showers

The seal between the bath and the tiling is to be properly made and maintained to prevent water leaking under the bath. The tiling should at least be provided on the tap wall and the long wall of the bath. If the bath is enclosed on three sides by walls, all three walls should be tiled. The tiling should be at least 1.5 metres high above the rim of the bath and preferably to full height where ceilings are low. The Diocesan Surveyor will arrange this when a shower is installed, but monitoring and reporting of leaks is requested.

Toilet roll holder

Provided as standard.

Towel rail

Provided as standard.

Tree works

Clergy are expected to prune small trees and shrubs at their own expense to prevent excessive growth and to consult the Finance Group before planting any kind of tree (proximity to buildings).

Tree works (Cont)

Clergy are asked not to undertake work which may be dangerous or require specialist knowledge and to avoid major work to any tree which might be the subject of a Preservation Order (and should consult the Finance Group if in doubt). Any trees in the grounds which are considered to merit preservation will be listed in Schedule 4 of the last Quinquennial survey report. The effect of listing is that the trees must not be felled, lopped or topped without the Finance Group's consent unless work is necessary to avoid immediate danger. Under conservation area status the majority of tree work is subject to consent by the Local Authority. As most houses are in conservation areas it is wise to consult the Property Department if in doubt. Fruit trees are clergy responsibility in all cases. (See hedges)

Utility Rooms

These are provided in houses built to **Green Guide standard** but are not necessarily provided in all properties. If provision is considered essential it will be subject to prioritisation and availability of funds.

Vacancy Bills

The Finance Group will generally reimburse charges relating to gas or electricity rather than paying for draining and refilling a water system. Telephone charges are the PCC's responsibility.

(See also Care of the Parsonage House at vacancy appendix and Letting).

Vacancy – Cleanliness

When the property is vacated we expect it to be really clean and tidy and any rubbish removed from garages and lofts etc., If after vacation it is felt the property is in need of professional cleaning the Board will forward the invoice will be sent to the former occupants for payment.

Vacancy - inspections

The Property Officer will advise Sequestrators of their responsibilities over the Parsonage house during a vacancy. When an appointment is announced the Diocesan Surveyor will arrange to meet the Incumbent-designate to confirm a schedule of work. Priority is always given to repairs to protect the fabric of the building and improvements needed to comply with the Diocesan policy regarding minimum provision however funds may not be available to undertake all work requested by incoming clergy. The Diocesan Surveyor will meet the PCC if possible prior to the appointment of an Incumbent.

See also under absence

Vacancy - insurance

If a house is vacant for more than 30 consecutive days cover reduces, with conditions in the following areas: escape of water/oil, malicious damage or vandalism, theft or attempted theft, and glass breakage. It is therefore essential that Sequestrators follow the instructions given to them in the notes entitled 'Care of the Parsonage House' issued to them when a vacancy is announced.

Vacancy-lettings

The Diocesan Office is likely to consider the possibility of a short term let at each vacancy and may arrange a tenancy, any rent collected is received by the Finance Group as a contribution towards maintenance costs and to keep down the Common Fund. Unfortunately this income is not ring fenced to the particular property and is part of the general housing budget. The Property Officer will liaise with the sequestrators in each case should a letting proposed. **(see Lettings)**

Vacancy Decorations

The PCC are asked to assist with redecoration at vacancy. The new Incumbent is responsible for this NOT the Finance Group. Material grants only can be given **(see Decoration Exceptions)** for materials in excess of the annual allowance at the discretion of the surveyor.

Walls

Any enquiries regarding ownership or repairs to boundary walls should be referred to the Diocesan Office for guidance. **See also Ivy**

Washing machines

Plumbing for washing machines is provided as standard. Built in appliances are to the benefit of the occupier and will not be maintained or replaced by the Finance Group.

Water charges

The Finance Group is responsible for all charges. Any communication received should be forwarded directly to the Diocesan Office for reply.

Windows – replacement

Once identified these houses will be prioritised by the Finance Group in order of urgency. Diocesan houses have a wide variety of windows and there is no single type or standard to which the Finance Group is working. Windows may from time to time be replaced on grounds of security, disrepair or heat loss but this depends on funding availability. Locks are provided as standard to ground floor windows.

Woodblock Flooring

Parsonage houses should have hard floor coverings to circulation areas, Study, Dining and Sitting Rooms. Sanding, polishing and staining the floor is deemed the responsibility of the occupant. Repairs to the woodblock when required are a Diocesan responsibility. If there are no hard floors then a compromise may have to be reached in regard to suitable arrangements eg, carpeting.

The Property Department – Wells (01749 670777)

CARE OF THE PARSONAGE HOUSE DURING A VACANCY

Please note that it is the policy of the Finance Group (Parsonages Board) to let the majority of properties during a vacancy and where appropriate this will be mentioned in the following notes.

The sequestrator role remains one of the primary responsibilities of the churchwardens during vacancy. The duties in regard to the house (assuming it is not to be sold or let) which is eventually to be re-occupied by the next incumbent are as follows:

1. Prior to the vacancy

The Diocesan Property Officer will arrange a convenient time to meet with the churchwardens and the incumbent prior to the vacancy to discuss the forthcoming vacancy and the letting of the parsonage house. Some useful notes will be issued at this meeting.

We would recommend that you discuss with the incumbent their removal arrangements and in particular the disposal of unwanted items and the final cleaning of the house, to ensure that it is both clean and completely empty (including garages and outhouses).

2. The day of departure

On the day of departure, ensure that all doors are locked and bolted and windows shut and secure. The outgoing occupant should hand over **all** the external keys to the sequestrators at the time of his departure. Please leave internal keys in the property, please do not **lock** internal doors and remove keys. Notify the Police and Neighbourhood Watch that the house is empty.

All PCC items including photocopiers and files should be removed to allow for letting and for safe keeping.

3. Services

Responsibility for gas, electricity and oil whilst the house is empty will be taken by the Finance Group. All accounts received at the property should be forwarded to the Property Department, together with final meter readings. **The central heating system** should be left **on** and timed to operate in cold weather for 2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the evening. However, the house **must** be inspected regularly. Please ensure in the case of oil systems that the oil supply is checked regularly and topped up as and when required. Most oil suppliers will invoice the Finance Group direct.

Should there be any problems with Gas central heating systems please contact the Property Department or out of office hours the Finance Group's heating contractor Office telephone no – 01458 – 832152

Emergency boiler breakdown – Ali Amghar 07810 - 353150

If a tenant is to occupy the house information will be provided when the responsibility for this is removed from yourselves for that period of the vacancy.

4. Telephone

Arrangements should be made to either suspend the 'parish' telephone number or have it diverted to a churchwarden, in order not to lose the telephone number. Telephone accounts and associated costs are the responsibility of the PCC. *Where the house is let the tenants will have a separate telephone number.*

5. Inspection

If the house remains empty please ensure that it is inspected regularly. If possible it would be helpful if curtains could be hung at windows, in order to create a more 'lived in' appearance and hopefully deter intruders. In the event of malicious damage please advise the Property Department and if appropriate the Police immediately. Please remove all mail promptly as this also advertises that the house is empty.

6. Garden

Gardens are the responsibility of the PCC before **and after a let**. Little needs to be done during the winter months, but during the 'growing' season the lawn will need cutting regularly, shrubs trimmed and borders weeded by volunteer labour if this can be arranged. Leaves need to be cleared in order to avoid blocked drains.

In the case of exceptionally large gardens, the Finance Group may be able to offer some assistance for grass cutting, but this must be agreed by the Diocesan Surveyor or Property Officer first.

If the house is let the tenants will be responsible for the garden during the period of the tenancy.

7. Decoration

The Decoration of the house is the responsibility of the new incumbent, and the Finance Group will offer a grant for materials only. The use of the grant will be at the new incumbent's discretion. The Finance Group would appreciate it if the PCC were able to assist by offering either volunteer labour or financial assistance. The Finance Group has no legal responsibility for internal decorations.

8. Ingoing works

Once an appointment has been made the Diocesan Surveyor will arrange to meet the incumbent-designate at the house to discuss any ingoing works that have been identified. Works of a larger nature might take place before this. A schedule of work can be provided by the department for use at the interviews, in order to avoid uncertainty and unanswerable questions.

9. Reoccupation

The Property Officer will liaise at the end of a tenancy when the vacancy end is nearing.

Immediately prior to reoccupation please check that all the services are in proper working order, and phone numbers restored, etc., Please discuss what Parish items can be moved back into the house with the new incumbent, as he may have different requirements for furniture etc than the last occupant.

For any further information or advice please do not hesitate to contact us.

Paul Toseland Tech RICS
Penny Cooke
Debbie Simmonds
Ali Walker

Head of Property, Diocesan Surveyor
Property Officer
Administrator
Administrator

October 2010

APPENDIX A

The Finance Group (Parsonages Board)

HOUSING POLICY FACTS AND FIGURES 2010

The Finance Group is responsible for

- 180 Parsonage Houses

- 75 Board or Glebe

- 9 Other Houses

- 3,500 Acres approximately of glebe land let in 350 holdings of varying size and application.

- 2 Commercial Investment Properties

Grants and Allowances

Decorations grant	Up to £60 per annum (not transferable) – Vacancy on agreement, materials only
Security lighting grant	Up to £250
Alarms funded	Diocese approximately £300 Charitable £250 Grant Incumbent/PCC approx £425