

HOUSING – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Houses sub-Committee is responsible for ‘maintaining the Diocesan stock of clergy houses in such a way as to:
- preserve their long term fitness for use and asset value and
 - provide a service to the satisfaction of those who live in them.’
- 1.2 It will undertake this work within very tight financial constraints. Its work will be most effective if those who live in the houses:
- are kept informed of policies and programmes of work, and
 - see themselves as partners.
- 1.3 The purpose of these notes is to outline the nature of that partnership and describe the responsibilities of each party.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOUSES SUB-COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The Houses sub-Committee wishes to provide an effective service, to establish a good relationship with clergy and to consult them when any works are envisaged which would have an impact on them or their family and to carry out work promptly and considerately.
- 2.2 The Houses Sub-Committee is committed to achieving value for money and efficiency in all it does.

Maintenance Policy

- 3.1 In order to preserve the long term value of clergy houses and ensure they are always fit to be used as family homes and centres of ministry, the sub-Committee has adopted a minimum standard for all houses. It is working towards a situation in which all clergy houses conform to this minimum standard. There are three types of maintenance programme:
- **Response** – dealing with immediate repairs arising from breakages, and wear and tear as reported by clergy.
 - **Cyclical** – regular servicing and renewal of components such as heating boilers and external painting.
 - **Planned** – programmes of work to bring a house up to the minimum standard. Progress in implementing this policy may be constrained by the size of the sub-Committee’s budget in any year.
- 3.2 The sub-Committee will:
- carry out its obligations to provide clergy with a responsive, cyclical and planned maintenance service as described;
 - keep clergy informed by letter, telephone or copy works order, of what action has been taken following a request for repairs;
 - aim to achieve the following response times following a request for repairs:
Emergency Repairs, defined as those which if not attend to could cause personal injury or serious structural damage – *24 hours*
Urgent Repairs, defined as those which, if not attended to, would lead to significant discomfort to those in the house – *5 working days*
Routine Repairs, defined as all other approved response repairs – *20 working days*

CLERGY RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.1 The Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 and amendments states in Clause 13(1) that “The Incumbent shall have a duty to take proper care of a parsonage house, being a duty equivalent to that of a tenant to use premises in a tenant-like manner”. Clergy are expected to co-operate with the sub-Committee in the performance of its work and to be responsible and diligent in the way they use and care for their home.
- 4.2 The budget each year is used to maintain and improve the stock of nearly 200 houses; this is inclusive of buildings insurance, water charges and Council Tax. Most of this money comes from parish shares.
- 4.3 Clergy are expected to be responsible for:
- all minor repairs (except electrical), undertaking them if it is within their capacity;
 - all repairs which do not arise as a result of fair wear and tear, any accidental damage shall be reported to the Diocesan Surveyor’s office and repaired at the expense of the clergy. The office will arrange for all repairs to be carried out and the resultant invoice will be passed on to the clergy for due payment;
 - clearing blocked drains and waste pipes;
 - replacing all broken glass (normally covered by the householders’ insurance policy);
 - the eradication of all pests including rats, mice and wasps;
 - keeping the grounds in a clean and tidy condition including the proper management of hedges, shrubs (and trees where possible) so as to avoid inconvenience to other people or danger to the structure of the house. Where trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order, or are within a Conservation Area, clergy must first obtain all necessary permissions from the local planning authority prior to carrying out any work on such identified trees;
 - keeping all drives and paths free of weeds;
 - not undertaking any alterations or improvements to the house (including electrical and plumbing works) without the written approval of the Diocesan Surveyor –

Please note that any alterations or improvements made will be regarded as part of the house and should not be removed when clergy move on without the specific approval of the Houses sub-Committee;

- maintaining the internal decorations of the house to the standard which existed when they moved in;
- insurance – the structure of all properties is insured. This does not include contents for which occupiers should make their own arrangements.

SATISFACTION

- 5.1 If the response to a request, or the method or manner of the sub-Committee’s work is not to the satisfaction of the clergy, write to their Archdeacon, who will discuss the matter further.
- 5.2 Clergy may also ask that their complaint be brought before the Houses sub-Committee or refer to the members elected by their archdeaconry, whose names are in the Diocesan Directory.