

Guidelines for the Ministry of Retired Clergy

Dear Friends,

Each year the ministers of the Diocese of Oxford gather in Christ Church to renew the promises we made at our ordination and to seek God's grace for the coming year. As the Bishop of Oxford, it is my privilege to ask all priests present this question:

“At your ordination to the priesthood, you took authority to watch over and care for God's people, to absolve and bless them in his name, to proclaim the gospel of salvation, and to minister the sacraments of his New Covenant. Will you continue as faithful stewards of the mysteries of God, preaching the gospel of Christ and ministering his holy sacraments?”

The priests are invited to respond: “With the help of God, I will”.

Our orders are for life but the way we exercise those orders and fulfil our promises changes throughout our lives. One of the biggest changes is the transition which comes in retirement. Each of us will need to reflect continually on how we will continue as faithful stewards of the mysteries of God.

As a Diocese we thank God for the faithful and gifted service of all of our retired clergy, however it is offered. It is of immense value to the Kingdom of God and to the Church of Jesus Christ.

This short guide draws together our policy and guidelines as a Diocese to better enable the ministry each person is able to offer so that everyone is able to contribute according to their gifts and all are able to flourish. Please read it carefully.

I am grateful to the retired clergy representatives for each archdeaconry for revising this material and drawing it together and for the work they do to represent the concerns of retired clergy to the Bishops and Archdeacons.

We seek as a Diocese to be a more Christ like Church for the sake of God's world: more contemplative, more compassionate and more courageous. I pray that these qualities may continue to deepen and grow in your own life and ministry however it is exercised.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Oxford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

The Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft
The Bishop of Oxford

1. Definition

Ordination is for life but receiving a stipend or a licence will come to an end at some point. 'Retired clergy' in these guidelines means clergy who no longer hold a licence, some of whom will have been stipendiary clergy and others Self Supporting Ministers (SSM). It does not mean that they might not be active in ministry! The majority (but not all) retired clergy have 'Permission to Officiate' (PtO) from their area bishop.

2. Starting Retirement

Retirement can involve an enormous change in the lives of clergy. They will often be moving to a smaller house and will now be responsible for its maintenance and upkeep. They may be leaving friends or social structures or moving away from relatives. On retirement, many experience a sense of loss, similar to bereavement. This loss is felt by most people retiring from work, but, for clergy, there is an added dimension because they remain ordained and usually feel a calling to continue to minister as a priest in some way. A lay person on retirement is often able to offer more time to their local, and indeed the national church in a whole variety of ways which is much appreciated. This is not so straightforward for retired clergy who have moved to a new parish.

Oxford Diocese provides a residential preparation course for those approaching retirement and also a day course specifically about housing and finance. Information about these are available from the Deputy Director of Mission or you can discuss matters with your archdeaconry Retired Clergy Representative (RCR).

The Diocese of Oxford will pay for membership of the *Retired Clergy Association* for those retiring within the diocese.

If you have retired from a post in Oxford diocese the RCR will have been informed and will be in contact. If you have moved into the diocese, your former diocese may have notified Oxford and contact established and a PtO requested.

3. Retired Clergy Representative (RCR)

In line with the House of Bishop's '*Policy on Granting Permission to Officiate 2018*', the pastoral care of retired clergy and support of their ministry is an important part of our diocesan policy. While this pastoral care is normally the responsibility of the appropriate parish priest or in some cases the area dean, it is ultimately the responsibility of the area bishop who appoints an RCR in each archdeaconry to assist in meeting these responsibilities.

Where possible, the area bishop also appoints, after consultation with the archdeaconry RCR and area dean, a deanery representative, who will endeavour to keep in touch with and support the retired clergy in their area.

When area bishops' offices learn of new retired clergy to their archdeaconry (usually because the person requests a PtO or because their previous diocese lets us know of their move), they are to pass the information onto the RCR. The RCR will aim to contact retired clergy soon after their arrival to the diocese to welcome them and to explore with them the shape of their ministry in retirement.

The RCR will normally organise an annual summer gathering for retired clergy. Depending on the numbers and the geography, this could be for the whole diocese or for smaller areas. The area bishop and archdeacon will be invited to these annual events.

All retired clergy, whether with PtO or not, are invited to take part in the Maundy Thursday service in the Cathedral for the Blessing of the Oils and Renewal of Ministerial Vows.

Area Deans are encouraged to have regular communication with their RCR and to invite the RCR to a Deanery Chapter at least annually.

RCR to be invited annually, and where appropriate to an agenda item, to the archdeaconry area team meeting.

One of the RCRs to be invited once a year (usually February or March) to speak to the Bishop Staff team's meeting.

Archdeaconry Retirement Clergy Representatives

Berkshire Archdeaconry

Revd Pam McKellen, p.mckellen13@gmail.com

Buckingham Archdeaconry

Revd Sue Morton, suemorton131@gmail.com

Dorchester Archdeaconry

Revd John Smith smithjl@btinternet.com

Oxford Archdeaconry

Revd Canon David Knight, davidcknight45@gmail.com

4. Ministry in Retirement

a) PtO and Safeguarding

No priest may exercise public ministry in the Church of England without either a licence or PtO from a bishop. A condition of being granted a licence or PtO is that the current safeguarding procedures are adhered to which at present involves:

1. Receiving a new Enhanced DBS clearance
2. Attendance at the required safeguarding training courses

It needs to be understood that without up to date DBS and safeguarding training, clergy may not robe at any service.

Clergy given an office or post of significant responsibility (including a House for Duty), should have a licence rather than PtO and would not normally be regarded as 'retired'.

Clergy requesting PtO should contact their area bishop's office. This will automatically trigger the process to fulfil DBS and safeguarding requirements.

PtO enables a cleric to officiate when invited to do so by an incumbent in the diocese in which the permission has been granted. A PtO is held at the diocesan bishop's pleasure and may be withdrawn at any time.

A priest with PtO in another diocese may be invited to conduct ministry on a one-off occasion by the invitation of an incumbent. It is the responsibility of the incumbent to contact their area bishop requesting confirmation that the invited priest has current PtO and is in good standing in their home diocese.

For repeated or regular ministry, the PtO of the other diocese is insufficient, and the priest in question must petition the area bishop of the archdeaconry in which the ministry is to take place for their PtO.

b) Exercising Ministry

Many retired clergy want to be active and are willing to offer their expertise in a supporting pastoral ministry, freed from some of the formal and administrative business of being a parish priest or sector minister.

All ministry should be supportive, enabling others to fulfil their own ministry. Retired clergy are most appreciated when they sensitively fill gaps that the existing team find it difficult to cover.

Retired clergy should never regard it as a right (or necessary to be true to their priestly ordination) that they should preach or preside at the Eucharist: the purpose of their ministry is to further the Kingdom rather than to make the retired feel they are valued.

Retired clergy may be a reservoir of theological, spiritual, counselling and other experience, available to the church, especially in the area of collaborative ministry. The diocese endeavours to make full use of this valuable resource, while recognising that it is always on a voluntary basis (see, 'Fees, Expenses and other Payments' below). This is by no means an exhaustive list but some examples of specialised areas of potential ministry in the Diocese include – Ministry Accompaniment, Bishop's Ministry Development Reviewers, End of Curacy Assessments, and Supporting the Ministerial Development and Training Programmes.

Retirement ministry might be of offering help in the local parish as and when required. This could vary between a very full involvement to being available for holiday or emergency cover only. It is good practice for the relationship and duties be set out in a working agreement. Ultimately the incumbent decides what ministry, if any, a retired cleric should have in their parish and retired clergy must respect this.

Some retired clergy are happy to offer help anywhere in the deanery (or wider) as required. In some cases, assisting a parish for a more focussed period in a vacancy can be helpful. The area bishop or archdeacon may approach some retired clergy for assistance in areas under-resourced with clergy.

Nobody should feel obliged to undertake voluntary tasks and all such tasks, whether in the parish or wider, should have a provision for review.

If a retired cleric finds him/herself at odds with the vision of their incumbent, the area dean should try to find a nearby parish where the retired cleric can minister harmoniously with another incumbent. Sometimes the RCR may be asked to listen to and support a retired cleric in a difficult situation.

c) Conducting Public Worship

Apart from vacancies and emergencies, the request to conduct public worship should be issued by the incumbent. Those inviting retired clergy to conduct worship should ensure that they are given all the information they need in advance. A form for this is offered at Appendix 1.

When invited to conduct public worship, retired clergy should bear in mind that the worship should be consistent with the usual pattern and conduct of worship of that church; care should also be taken to respect the ministry of lay people and, where the laity is regularly involved in worship, this practice should be encouraged. When arranging the worship, it is important to be sensitive in enquiring whether a Reader will be preaching or performing a liturgical role during the service.

5. Ministerial Review and Continuing Ministerial Education (CME)

Retired clergy are not required to have an annual ministerial review; if though they wish to have a review, they are welcome to contact the area office and request it.

Clergy with PtO are welcome and encouraged to take up CMD provision offered by the Diocese of Oxford. As a mark of the Diocese's gratitude for your ministry amongst us, course fees are waived for all retired clergy. Details of courses available can be found here, <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/serving-god-together/cmd/>

6. Disciplinary Procedures

All clergy, retired or not, are subject to the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 (CDM). In the case of clergy with PtO the bishop may simply revoke the Permission, although in serious cases the CDM is an option.

7. Representation

The Church Representation Rules were changed in 2004 (Membership of Deanery Synods Rule 24) to give a limited franchise to those with PtO.

Those with PtO have the statutory right to elect one of their number, for every ten or less in a Deanery, onto the House of Clergy of the Deanery Synod, which may also co-opt those with PtO. Those so elected or co-opted may vote and stand as candidates in Diocesan and General Synod elections.

Area Deans with Lay Chairs are encouraged to be proactive in ensuring ongoing, active PtO representation on their Deanery Synods. Without this representation, retired clergy are disenfranchised and can play no part in the governance of the church.

Those with PtO do not have an automatic right to be members of the Deanery Clergy Chapter, as it is not a synodical body. Practice varies in different deaneries: some deaneries may invite retired clergy to some or all of their chapter meetings, some only a small number, and some deaneries have separate chapter meetings for retired clergy.

8. Communications

There is an eNews mailing for regular diocesan news. The eNews mailing is sent to all licenced and PtO clergy.

If you cannot find the information that you require on the diocesan website, the RCRs are always glad to be of help.

9. Fees, Expenses and other Payments

Oxford Diocese conforms to the guidelines issued by the Church of England Ministry Division and the changes made by General Synod which were effective from 1st January 2013. The diocesan website gives information about the diocesan fees policy, <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/support-services/finance/parochial-fees/>

Normally it is the incumbent's responsibility to request help from retired clergy for conducting occasional offices (baptisms, weddings and funerals) and their associated visiting. It has to be understood that the fees belong to the parish (partly repaid to the ODBF) and so when an individual or a funeral director makes a direct approach to a retired cleric, the retired cleric must seek the agreement of the incumbent of the appropriate benefice and make arrangement for the fees to be paid to the PCC. It is the PCC's responsibility to pay two thirds of the fee locally to the retired cleric (without a licence and with PtO), and to remit to the ODBF the remaining third of the fee. No clergy person is allowed to take services without the appropriate permission or authorization. It is essential that these procedures are followed so that the ODBF can meet its audit and other legal obligations.

10. Retired Clergy Leaving the Diocese

When a retiring clergy person leaves the diocese, the area bishop will invite them for an exit interview. RCR to be informed of retired clergy leaving the diocese.

11. Additional resources

Safeguarding: National Policy & Practice

www.churchofengland.org/media/37378/protectingallgodschildren.pdf
www.churchofengland.org/media/37405/promotingasafechurch.pdf

The Parochial Expenses of the Clergy

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/life-events-parochial-fees-and-guidance/guide-church>

Clergy Pensions Scheme

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/2019%20Clergy%20Booklet%20v%201.0_0.pdf

Retired Clergy Association

www.rcacoe.org

Supporting the Ministry of Retired Clergy

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/supporting%20ministry%20of%20retired%20clergy%20june%202014.pdf>

(From which much of this document has been drawn.)

Appendix 1

Sunday Service Information - Diocese of Oxford

(A checklist to be used as appropriate if needed)

Church :

Address of Church :
(inc. postcode)

Where to Park? :

Church Contact Name:
Tel No :

Date and time :

Form of Service :

BCP or Common Worship?

Usual Vesture :

Readings
Old Testament :
New Testament :
Gospel :

Preacher : Celebrant / Reader / other

Lord's Prayer : Traditional / Modern

Lesson Readers (If yes state which readings) Yes/ No

Intercessor Yes/No

Administration of Communion Assistance Yes/No

LLM participation in the Ministry of the Word Yes/No

Any other information?