DIOCESE of OXFORD



LIVING IN A CLERGY HOUSE IN THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD

FAQs

Issue No 8 – Date Issued: April 2026

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The view over Blenheim Palace from Woodstock Rectory

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your clergy house in the Oxford Diocese. We hope this document will help you feel informed, supported and at home as you settle into a property that is both your family home and a valuable diocesan asset.

This guide has been prepared alongside the Buildings Committee Housing Policy and General Guidance Notes (approved March 2026). It brings together answers to the questions most commonly raised by clergy, whether you are moving into a new house, currently living in one or preparing to move on.

Our aim is to explain, as clearly and helpfully as possible, what the Diocese is responsible for, what falls to you as the occupier and how we can work together to look after these homes for you and for future occupants. We recognise that every property – and every household – is different, and we encourage you to contact the Property Department whenever you are unsure or would like advice.

The document is arranged into sections covering the main aspects of living in a diocesan clergy house, including internal and external matters, moving in and out, adaptations, sub-letting and who to contact for help. We hope you find it a useful reference and a reassuring guide during your time in the Oxford Diocese.

INTERNAL HOUSING

Internal Decorating:

Q. What decoration can I do?
A. The house is your home and you can carry out any internal decorating you wish.

However, at the same time we would remind you that the house will also be occupied by your successors in the office. Using wallpaper or very strong coloured paints will make redecoration more difficult and expensive for clergy coming to the house after you.

We recommend that any decorating you carry out accommodates a scheme using solely pastel/neutral colours. We would be grateful if you kept all the ceilings in a white matt finish and any gloss work in your house to brilliant white paint.

If bold colours are used then it is expected that the colours are returned to neutral colours at the time of vacating. In these situations, the Diocese may arrange for professional redecoration and could request reimbursement if needed

You are not permitted to apply any textured paint finishes to ceilings and walls. We will not sanction painting your kitchen units or utility room units.

Clergy will be expected to carry out any further decorating required and a £500 decoration grant is offered to you between each quinquennial survey to carry this out and on production of receipts the Diocese can reimburse you.

Floor Finishes (See also "Moving into your home")

Q. What type of floor finishes will I need to provide myself?
A. The Buildings Committee is unable to provide floor finishes to rooms other than "wet areas" (kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, etc.). See also the section "Moving into Your Home".

The Diocesan Policy is not to give permission for wood strip flooring, laminate flooring or ceramic tiles due to poor installations in the past where the Diocese has had to rectify poorly fitted flooring.

We would recommend that non wool carpets are fitted within the property, as this will help occupants with allergies and potential carpet moth infestation.

Where there is parquet flooring the Diocese will carry out localised repairs where it is loose but sanding and sealing of existing parquet flooring falls to the occupant to manage and maintain.

Pets

Q. What Pets am I permitted to keep?
A. The Buildings Committee requests that a maximum of two cats and two dogs are permitted to be kept in your house at any one time.

The Buildings Committee requests that any pets, other than domestic cats and dogs, are kept outside at all times. Prior agreement of the Buildings Committee is required if it is your intention to keep animals other than the permitted cats and dogs.

It is becoming more common that when the ODBF purchases new property, in some instances, they are required to enter into covenants which specifically prevent the keeping of some animals as pets at the property, i.e. chickens, ducks, etc., or on occasion, a restriction on the number of cats and dogs that can be kept.

It is necessary to obtain permission from DEFRA before keeping certain animals at a domestic residence, i.e. pigs, sheep, goats. Where appropriate, you will need to provide suitable consent from the requisite authority. Before you purchase or introduce any such animals to the house, please confirm with the Diocesan offices whether any such restrictions/covenants exist at your home.

On vacation of the property, you will be responsible for removing associated structures used for retaining pets/domesticated animals and making good any damage to the garden.

Please be aware that pet foodstuffs and bedding could attract rats mice etc. Vermin control and/or damage caused to Diocesan property as a result of vermin infestation will not be funded from the Diocesan budget.

Please remember, any damage caused by your pets to your home or garden will be paid for by you. (Any work must be carried out by a contractor approved by the Diocesan Office).

Cat and Dog Flaps

Q. Am I able to have a cat or dog flap fixed through one of the external doors?
A. Where permitted, cat and dog flaps may be fitted through external doors only. It is the responsibility of the clergy to pay for both the cost of the cat/dog flap, and the cost of installing such a flap within the external door.

We will also require that you pay for the cost of the future reinstatement of the door panel/door structure in advance of the work being carried out. Any work must be carried out by a contractor approved by the Diocesan Offices. As with any other structural alteration to the house, no cat/dog flap should be installed without the written prior consent of the Diocesan Surveyor.

Kitchen Appliances

Q. Are any kitchen appliances provided in diocesan houses?
A. The Diocese does not provide or maintain any kitchen equipment ("White Goods" or cookers) within its houses.

When you move into your home the Diocese will offer you a cooker grant of up to £300 or half the cost depending on the lesser sum on production of receipts which are to be sent to the Diocesan Offices for reimbursement. This grant is for the cooker only and not for connection, extended guarantees etc. The cooker is yours and as and when you leave, it must be removed. No further grants are offered if the cooker goes wrong.

Q. We have a cooker that is bigger than the standard 600mm wide cooker, can the kitchen be altered to accommodate this?
A. The Diocese has no objection for the kitchen being altered to accommodate the bigger cooker but at no cost to the Diocese and permission will need to be sought from the Diocesan Surveyor prior to any works starting.

The works usually includes removing base units, wall units, extractor fan, alter the worktop to the new width required, extending the tiling behind the new cooker space down to floor level, new flooring as there will be a bigger cooker opening, new extractor fan for the new opening, possible relocation of electric sockets and/or gas points. As and when you move you will have to pay for the reinstatement of the opening to a 600mm wide opening. Any work must be carried out by a contractor approved by the Diocesan Office.

Q. Who is responsible for built in kitchen appliances.
A. The Diocese is not responsible for built in kitchen appliances, servicing, or replacement, and if they require replacing this would be the responsibly of the occupant.

Fixture and Fittings:

Q. Am I able to remove or alter any fixtures and fittings in my home?
A. All fixtures and fittings included in your home are part of the fabric of the parsonage. If you would like to alter or replace any these items, please contact the Diocesan Surveyor before attempting any alterations.

Electrical Wiring and Equipment:

Q. What is the policy regarding electrical equipment and wiring within a parsonage house?
A. All electrically operated equipment owned by yourself is your responsibility.

Its general safety and adequacy should be checked on a regular basis. It is important to note that

faulty appliances can seriously affect residual current devices (the small switches in the consumer

unit), the result of which will mean that your electricity supply will be cut.

Your home's electrical circuits are tested to NICEIC standards at the time of the quinquennial inspection (every 5 years). Where general electrical routine problems are encountered suggesting further investigation, an additional test is carried out at that time.

The recommendations and standards of the IEE have been adopted. It is essential to remember that under no circumstances should the electrical wiring or its associated equipment (switches, power sockets, ceiling roses etc.), be altered or tampered with by yourself, members of your family or any unauthorised person.

Under new legislation such work would be illegal. It is important to remember that the above requirements include electrical equipment in gardens.

Q. What do I do if I lose electrical power to the property?
A. Check with neighbours to see if they have lost electricity as it might be a power cut and then contact your electricity supplier to report the loss of power.

Check the fuse board to see if any of the circuits have tripped and reset if possible. If not possible unplug all appliances, lights etc from the property and see if the trip will reset. In quite a few cases the problem is with an appliance and if unplugged it allows the trip to be reset and the defective appliance to be identified.
If you still are unable to restore power to a circuit or the property, please contact the Diocesan office. If it turns out the power failure is down to an appliance you own, the Diocese will invoice you for the callout and repair.

Doorbell Camaras and Security Alarm Systems

Q. Does the Oxford Diocese provide doorbell camaras for new members of Clergy?
A. If you feel that a doorbell camara would be useful to you then the Diocese will contribute towards a doorbell camara system. However, the Diocese cannot cover any monitoring charges. Please contact the Diocesan Surveyor to discuss your requirements.

Q. Does the Oxford Diocese provide security alarm system for new members of clergy?
A. The Diocese will consider a security alarm system due to high local crime rates, personal circumstances or other concerns and is assessed on a case-by-case basis. We do ask that you contact the Diocesan Surveyor to discuss your requirements and confirm in writing that you will use the alarm. There will be paperwork to be completed that will be provided by the alarm company, so they have a record of you living at the property.

Any repairs due to fault and not misuse will be covered by the ODBF. All other costs will be the responsibility of the occupant.

If it turns out that you do not use the alarm, please contact the Diocesan offices and the contract will

be cancelled.

Telephones and Broadband

Q. Who pays for installation of telephone & Broadband and ongoing line rentals?
A. This falls to you to contact a telephone supplier and arrange for a telephone line/number to be installed to the property.

If you feel that you require additional telephone sockets within your house (over and above those already installed), the cost of supply of the additional wiring and equipment must be met by yourself. However, prior to any authorisation, it is necessary to agree any work with the Diocesan Surveyor.

Recent changes in the regulations relating to competitive practices in the telephone industry now mean that BT is unable to retain telephone numbers on residential accounts during vacancies.

Utility Bills

Q. Who pays for my Council Tax & Water Rates?
A. The Diocesan budget meets the annual council tax and water charges at your house for clergy occupying parsonage houses

Q. Who pays for the electric, gas and/or oil to the property?
A. These costs will fall to yourself whilst you are occupying the property and you will need to open accounts in your name when you move in. When considering your energy supplier, we would ask that you research green energy tariff providers.
When vacating the property, we would ask you to close your relevant account and name the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance, Church House, Langford Locks, Kidlington, OX5 1GF, as the new account holder.

Boilers and Heating Systems

Q. Who pays for servicing my boiler?
A. The Diocese has a contract with a heating contractor who carry out the servicing of your boiler on an annual basis. When your boiler is due for a service, you will be contacted by the contractor, who will arrange a convenient appointment with you.

After the inspection, the Diocese will send you a copy of the "Landlord/ Homeowner Gas Safety Record" or a "Landlord Oil Installation Check", which you should retain

At the time of the service, please mention to the contractor any additional minor plumbing

work that can be carried-out at the time of the boiler servicing (e.g. minor radiator problems, such as thermostatic controls, the boiler programmer,.) and either they can be rectified then or the contractor will contact the Diocese for approval to carry out the works at another time.

The Diocese does not service your cooker or provide gas safety certificates relating to any of your own gas appliances.

Q. What happens if I run out of heating oil?
A. Please ensure that you keep a regular check on the level of oil in your storage tank. Many heating oil providers will now offer you a service, whereby they will check the level of oil in your tank and "top it up" if necessary.
If you feel that the sight gauge is giving an inaccurate reading, please contact the Diocesan offices as soon as possible. The Diocese cannot accept responsibility for damage to heating systems as a result of clergy running out of heating oil and may charge you for the callout of an heating engineer to prime the boiler.

Under these circumstances the Diocesan office will invoice you for the full cost of the contractor's work. Please ensure that you fit a high tensile steel padlock to help avoid oil theft.

Chimney Sweeping

Q. Who pays for sweeping my chimneys?
A. The cost of sweeping a flue is the responsibility of clergy. It is important to regularly sweep flues to ensure that there are no blockages (e.g. from bird's nests, etc.) following the spring/summer period. Further, you should use competent contractors, possibly someone with a recommendation from residents within your parish. Please send a copy of the certificate once the chimney has been swept to the Diocesan Surveyor for the property file.

Multi Fuel Burning Stove

Q. Can we fit a multi fuel/wood burning stove?
A. In line with reducing the carbon footprint from parsonage houses the installation of multifuel/wood burning stoves will not be permitted due to emission of greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide and particulate matter into the atmosphere.

Q The house I live in/going to live in already has a multi fuel/wood burning stove who is responsible for it?
A. Where there are multi fuel/woodburning stoves in a house, the Diocese will not maintain or repair them. It is the responsibility of the occupant to get the chimney swept once a year and to send a copy of the certificate once the chimney has been swept to the Diocesan Survey for the property file.

Wall Tiles

Q. Am I allowed to change wall tiles, or to paint them with a proprietary paint?
A. It may be that you do not like the style or colour of wall tiles within your house. Our current policy is to provide wall tiles which are comparatively neutral. Wall tiles may not be painted.

Curtain Tracks, Curtains and Blinds

Q. Who provides curtain battens and tracks?
A. The Diocese will replace broken curtain battens or tracks to properties

Q. Who provides curtains and blinds in my home?
A. All curtains and blinds are your own responsibility. Existing blinds will not be replaced from the Diocesan budget.

Q. Will the Diocese reimburse me a proportion of the cost of the curtains and/or blinds when I leave?
A. The Diocese will not reimburse you the cost of curtains and/or blinds. If you wish to leave them when you move from the property, then they might benefit the next occupant of the property.

Roof Void

Q. What can I store within the roof?
A. We try to discourage storage within the roof void for two significant reasons. Firstly, roofs are designed to receive light loads, mainly for access or properly designed water tank platforms. This is particularly significant where the house is a more modern structure where prefabricated roof trusses have been used.

If heavy goods are stored (or lighter ones in high piles), then significant damage to ceilings (and even the roof structure itself) can occur.

Secondly, with modern levels of roof insulation (up to 300mm) it is necessary to maintain the same thickness of the insulant over the whole of the roof void. By allowing storage over the insulant, you are significantly decreasing its effectiveness and ensuring that your heating bills are higher than necessary.

Q. Will extra boarding be put in the roof space to allow additional storage?
A. It is not Diocesan policy to provide loft boarding facilities within existing properties. It is essential that the roof insulation covers as much of the roof void to retain heat within the main house.

Q. Can I leave personal possessions in the roof when I leave?
A. When leaving a property please ensure that the roof space is completely empty of all your personal possessions. If the Diocese arranges for the roof space to be cleared of personal possessions and if costs are incurred conducting this process, reimbursement will be sought from you.

Glazing to Windows & Doors

Q. Who is responsible for accidental damage to glass in windows and doors?
A. Damage to windows and doors is covered under the Board's block buildings insurance policy. Occupiers will be asked to meet the "excess" of any claim to replace broken glass.

The current excess on the policy is £500. This means that you will be expected to pay for the full cost of any breakage up to £500. If, however, the cost to replace the damaged glass is less than £500 you are expected to pay for the broken glass in full.

However, you will not be expected to pay for broken seals on double glazed units or structural related damage.

EXTERNAL HOUSE

TV Aerials, Satellite Dishes, Cable TV

Q. Does the Diocese provide TV aerials/Satellite Dishes/Cable TV?
A. The Diocese is not responsible for the repair and/or replacement of TV aerials this would be a cost that you would have to meet.

If it is your intention to install additional television sockets within your home, it will be necessary for you to obtain the prior consent of the Diocesan Surveyor. Many families enjoy watching programmes delivered by satellite and cable television stations. The erection of a satellite dish is an essential part of the installation, and we would ask that the dish is placed in an unobtrusive position that will not cause structural defects or encourage the ingress of surface water.

It should be remembered that satellite dishes often require planning permission prior to installation, particularly in Conservation Areas and where your home is a listed building. Where a cable company's installation is agreed, it is essential that you ensure that the cable company makes good any disturbance to a driveway, garden and wall areas. Please ensure that no cables are taken through window frames as this is the preferred option by some companies as they find it easier than drilling through masonry.

Any wayleaves will need to be agreed by the Diocesan Surveyor and will be at the cost of the

occupier and any documentation will be required to contain sketch drawings identifying the line of wayleaves and the position of aerials. These documents need to be held at the property and the Diocesan Office.

All equipment is to be removed when leaving the property and making good the fabric of the building is to be carried out.

Security Lights:

Q. Who is responsible for external security lights?
A. The Diocese will provide LED external security lights, where necessary. We would ask that occupants do not undertake any external electricity works.

Drains/Blocked Drains

Q. Who is responsible for blocked drains?
A. If foul drains become blocked, it may be the responsibility of the local water authority to clear them as they manage and maintain shared foul drainage systems. To determine if the drain is shared, check with your neighbour to see

Q. If it turns out that it is just my drains that are blocked, what should I do?
A. Over the past few years we have experienced blocked drains caused by materials other than toilet paper being flushed through the w/c – e.g. baby wipes, nappies, sanitary items, fat being poured down sink wastes. Such blockages can be severe and cause significant disruption to households whilst the problem is being remedied. Therefore, in your own interest, please ensure that only proprietary toilet tissue is used, and fat is disposed of correctly. If the Diocesan offices is requested to clear a blocked drain, then please be aware that the cost of any such work will be borne by the occupant, should the problem be one which has been caused by "misuse".

Q. Who do I call in the event of blocked drains, out of hours
A. OPC drain services – 01235-835999
During normal office hours, please contact the Property Department.

Q. What do I do if the foul drains are shared with neighbours?
A. In 2011 sections of foul drains that are shared with neighbours became the responsibility of the local water authority. If you discover blocked drains, then consult with your neighbour to see if they have the same issue and if they do please contact the local water authority to arrange for the drains to be cleared at no cost to you or the Diocese. All water authorities have their emergency telephone numbers on their web site. If you want to know who your local water authority is then please contact the Diocese who will provide this information.

Septic Tanks

Q. Who pays for emptying our septic tank?
A. The cost of emptying the septic tanks rests with the Diocese. When you think that a septic tank is becoming full, please contact the Property Department, who will arrange and pay the cost of an appropriate contractor to empty the unit as soon as possible.

It is generally recommended that a septic tank is emptied once every 12 months, although some units can work well after that period. Where possible and practical, please avoid placing excessive quantities of bleach and biological detergents down the drains.

Rainwater Goods

Q. Who is responsible for cleaning out the rainwater goods on my home?
A. The Diocese is responsible for cleaning out the rainwater goods and will carry this out as part of the quinquennial survey. If, however, you notice that the rainwater goods are blocked, and vegetation growing out of them please contact the Diocesan offices and they will arrange for them to be cleared.

Maintaining Your Garden:

Q. Who is responsible for maintenance of my garden
A. The upkeep and maintenance of gardens including grass, hedges, shrubs etc is your responsibility.

Q. What if I am unable to cope with my garden?
A. It is your responsibility to maintain and control your garden. You can do this by undertaking the work yourself or paying someone to help you (please note this is a legitimate expense and can be claimed against tax).

Should you find yourself unable to deal with it on a routine basis, your Parish may be willing to give practical help or pay towards the cost of employing a gardener. Alternatively, if you are having problems in getting the matter resolved, please discuss with the Archdeacons office.

Garden Sheds

Q. Am I provided with a garden shed?
A. The Diocese does not provide new sheds unless it is considered that there is a lack of adequate storage space within the house and/or garage.

Unless the existing shed structure poses a health and safety danger or the house storage facilities are considered inadequate, we will not repair "old" sheds. However, we will remove them from the parsonage grounds if they are a danger.

Garden Compost

Q. Am I allowed to construct a compost heap within the garden?
A. Compost heaps are considered a necessary part of everyday gardening and are often essential for the collection of general garden debris.

However, we would ask that you ensure that the compost is well controlled and not built against boundary fences, walls, sheds and kept free from vermin and at the end of your occupancy is removed in total and the compost site made good.

Fences

Q. Do you provide garden fences to control and retain family pets?
A. We do not provide fencing to control or retain pets, nor will we be able to amend existing fencing for those purposes. If you want this work carried out, we can put you in touch with approved contractors and you will have to pay for the works.

Garden Planting

Q. What recommendations are available when planting in my garden?
A. The Diocese requests that you do not plant any new trees in your garden, nor any large shrubs close to the parsonage house or its out- buildings or neighbouring properties. We are very concerned about the effect of trees and shrubs on foundations, and drains.

We are also anxious that new trees planted in a parsonage garden do not become protected by the local authority Tree Preservation Orders. We need to avoid the potential rising costs of tree maintenance affecting the Diocesan budgets.

Please also ensure that ivy and other creeping plants, such as Wisteria, Virginia Creeper, ivy etc. are not planted by the property and are removed from the masonry of the property.

Patios and Paths

Q. Would the Diocese increase the size of a patio area or increase paths around a house?
A. The Diocese will not provide additional paths around a house or increase the size of a patio area or install patio areas.

Ponds

Q. Can a pond be installed?
A. The installation of a pond is not permitted as it may lead to maintenance issues for future occupants and/or the Diocese.

Q. There is already a pond in the garden, who is responsible for its upkeep?
A. Unfortunately this does not fall to the Diocese. Removal of ponds could be problematic due to the protected species and wildlife it supports.

Pest Control

Q. Who is responsible for pests?
A. As the occupant you are responsible for dealing with wasps, bees, carpet moths, ants, bed bugs and fleas within the house or garden.

If you have rats, mice, glis glis, moles, squirrels, etc in the garden then this is down to you to arrange and pay for their removal.

If pests are present due to the condition of your home, such as rubbish, pets, compost bins or general uncleanliness then this will be down to you.

Q. There are rats, mice, glis glis in my house due to a crack in the structure of the house, who is responsible then?
A. This will fall to the Diocese. The Diocese will arrange for an approved contractor to attend to remove the pests and then will arrange for the crack in the structure to be repaired.

Trees

Q. Who is responsible for maintaining trees growing within the boundaries of the property?
A. Shrubs and "dwarf"varieties of deciduous/evergreen trees are your responsibility.
All other trees are the responsibility of the Diocese.

Please ensure that growth to those plants under your control is regularly controlled and that foliage does not affect the house masonry, nor impair the free flow of air around the house or out-buildings.

Many properties are within Conservation Areas and may also have Tree Preservation Orders attached to them. Where this is the case, Local Authority consent will be required, prior to carrying out work (except in the case of an emergency). Please help us by reporting problems with trees to the Diocesan offices as soon as possible. We try and carry out a Health and Safety Duty of Care Survey on mature trees as part of the quinquennial inspection.

Please also remember that you have a duty of care to all visitors who enter your property, and it is essential we collectively take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.

Electric Cars and Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Point

Q. If I have or want to have an electric car how do I arrange for an electric vehicle (EV) charging point to be installed?
A: The Diocese welcomes and encourages the installation of EV charging points as we are committed to our Net Zero commitment by 2035. As part of the strategy to become Net Zero it is generally considered that the use of Electric Vehicles reduces personal carbon. To assist your personal journey to Net Zero we can help as follows:

1. **Request Permission**: Prior to any installation, kindly get in touch with the Diocesan Surveyor to seek permission. With the varied property portfolio within the Diocese we need to ensure that work is appropriate to the property and within local planning restrictions.
2. **Financial Responsibility**: The Property Department, sadly, cannot provide financial support for the installation or removal of the EV charging point (should you choose to remove it when you move). However, we recommend checking with your electricity provider, as they may offer incentive packages to assist with the costs. Its worth discussing with your Archdeacon too if there are any grants available too to help with costs.
3. **Professional Installation**: Please ensure that installation is carried out by a competent contractor who adheres to current building and NICEIC electrical regulations.
4. **Electrical Service Upgrades**: If the installation necessitates any upgrades to the electrical services of the parsonage house, please be aware that these expenses will be your responsibility. It is worth noting that in most cases, such upgrades are not required or changes to Boards should be at the expense of the Electricity Distributors i.e. Western Power
5. **Documentation**: Please do not forget to obtain the relevant certificates and provide copies of the installation to the Property Team

Electric Bicycle/Scooter Charging

Q. If I have an electric bike or scooter how do I store and charge it?
A: Electric bikes all come with rechargeable batteries, typically charged using a cable plugged into a 13amp wall socket. These devices are powered by lithium-ion batteries, which can become unstable if they are not used properly, or become damaged or overcharged, which can lead to the battery and device catching fire and releasing toxic smoke.

To reduce the likelihood of an incident, we recommend the following:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when charging your device, and never use charging equipment that isn't compatible with the make of your e-scooter, e-bike etc.

- Always buy your charging equipment from a reputable retailer or directly from a manufacturer who will perform rigorous tests to ensure their products meet UK safety standards. This will ensure that the battery charging commences at the right level and ceases before overcharging occurs.
- Do not use a battery that has signs of damage, has received a sharp blow, has been dropped, or is in poor condition. Replace it with a new one compatible with your bike.
- Batteries should not be left to charge unattended overnight or when your home is unoccupied.
- Avoid leaving items continually on charge after the charge is complete.
- Unplug battery chargers when not in use.
- Ensure you frequently check your charging cable for wear and tear and replace it if any damage is evident.
- Think carefully about where to charge the bike, it may be convenient to use the hall or entrance lobby to your house, but make sure you can safely exit your home should an incident occur.
- No flammable or combustible material should be within 2 metres of the charging point.
- You should ensure that the charging area is covered by a combination smoke/heat alarm.
- Consider purchasing a lithium battery fire extinguisher, designed to help tackle lithium-ion battery fires.

MOVING INTO YOUR HOME

Initial Meeting

Every effort will be made to ensure that your move is as straightforward as possible. Once you have been offered and you have accepted your new post in the Oxford Diocese you will meet the Diocesan Surveyor at your new home so that the property can be inspected and any works can be agreed prior to your move.

Schedules of the agreed works will be sent to you and, where possible, will be carried out before you occupy the property.

Ingoing Decoration Grant

Q. What decorating will be carried out for me?

A. The Diocese can offer a decoration grant up to £1000 and this will be determined when you meet the Diocesan surveyor who will assess the current condition of the internal decoration. There are 2 ways in which you can claim the decoration grant:

i) Produce receipts for materials, labour or both and the Diocese will reimburse you.

Unfortunately, if we do not receive a receipt to show that the invoice has been paid in full then the

Diocese cannot reimburse you.
Or
ii) The Diocese can pay the decorator direct if an invoice is made out and sent to the following:

The Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance
Church House Oxford
Langford Locks
Kidlington
Oxon
OX5 1GF

It is vital that you arrange for the contractor to invoice the Diocese to advise them that they will not receive payment for at least 2-3 weeks after receipt of the invoice.

We would remind you that the house will also be occupied by your successors in office. Using wallpaper or very strong coloured paints will make redecoration more difficult and expensive for clergy coming to the house after you.

We recommend that any decorating you carry out accommodates a scheme using solely pastel colours. We would be grateful if you kept all the ceilings in a white matt finish and any gloss work in your house to brilliant white paint.

You are not permitted to apply any textured paint finishes to ceilings and walls. We will not sanction painting your kitchen units, utility room units and/or wall tiles.

Floor Coverings

Q. Which floor coverings will be provided for me?
A. The Diocese will replace the flooring in the "wet areas" (kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, etc.) if considered by the Diocesan Surveyor to be in an unacceptable condition and will be replaced with a vinyl cushion floor.

We request that you do not replace vinyl floor finishes provided by Diocese without the prior consent of the Diocesan Surveyor. However, where such floor finishes are excessively worn, we will endeavour to replace them at our cost

Laminate Flooring

Q. Can I lay laminate flooring in lieu of carpet?
A. It is not Diocesan policy to give permission or install wood strip flooring, laminate flooring or ceramic tiles due to poor installation in the past where the Diocese has had to rectify poorly fitted flooring.

MOVING OUT OF YOUR HOME

Q. What am I expected to do upon leaving my home?
A. Prior to leaving your home, you will be contacted by the Diocesan Surveyor who will arrange to meet with you and discuss your views about the suitability (or otherwise) of the parsonage. It would be most helpful if you were able to inform the Diocesan Surveyor of your impressions (both good and bad) of the house.

The Diocese does expect the following to be carried out before you leave:

- Before you leave it is your responsibility to keep the interior of the house in good decorative order and to ensure that the property is professionally cleaned and left clean and tidy and to clear of all rubbish and unwanted furnishings. The garden is to be cleared of all possessions including, pots, garden rubbish, trampolines, swings etc. with the grass, shrubs and hedges cut etc.
- Where the Diocese is required to undertake works to bring the property up to an acceptable standard – such as full or partial redecoration, the replacement of damaged floor coverings, repairs to damaged joinery, internal walls or similar items, beyond what is considered fair wear and tear, these works will be instructed by the Diocesan Surveyor. The Diocese will seek reimbursement of the associated costs from the previous occupier
- Any belongings which are left in the main house, outbuildings, sheds or in the garden after vacating the property will be cleared on instruction from the Diocesan Surveyor. If costs are incurred conducting this process, reimbursement will be sought from the previous occupier of the house

Q. What 'admin' do I have to do before I leave?
A. When you move there is some 'admin' that you need to do to help the Diocese and the church wardens during the vacancy, see below:

- Please inform the Diocesan offices of the names of your utility service providers (gas and/or electric), together with your customer reference numbers.
- You will need to carefully note your utility meter readings gas and/or electric) and inform the respective companies of your intended leaving date and of course ensure full payment of outstanding costs.
- You will need to transfer the utility accounts from your name into the following, so the account is not terminated and causing a problem for the next occupant and/or your church wardens who will be managing the house during the vacancy: The Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance, Church House Oxford, Langford Locks, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 1GF

- For heating oil, it would be most helpful if you were able to retain sufficient heating oil in the

tank for the boiler to be re-fired and the heating system to be tested after you have left. Leaving the tank with little oil in-situ can lead to costly repairs to the boiler fuel pump and burner.

- During winter months, however, the central heating should be left on a low setting. You will be advised of the settings when you meet with the Diocesan Surveyor before you leave. Please inform the Diocesan offices if this has been done.
- Please arrange to have your post redirected by the post office.
- During a vacancy the Diocese will arrange for the grass to be cut, and hedges maintained but will not manage shrubs and borders. . If you know of anyone local who can do this during the vacancy then let the Diocesan Surveyor know when they visit.
- As we are unable to retain telephone numbers you may wish to invite your PCC to retain the account themselves with an answer phone so that messages can be picked up.
- The main front door key should be returned; all other keys are to remain in a drawer in the kitchen of the property. Please confirm who you are giving the keys to, ideally, it should be given to your Churchwarden. The Churchwarden will take on the responsibility of inspecting the property during the vacancy and for the property to be inspected once a week whilst it is empty.

DISABLED ADAPTATIONS

Q. Who should I contact if I need a disabled adaption to the house?
A. Should there be a requirement for any adaptations within the parsonage house to facilitate continued residence, the initial contact should be made with the relevant Archdeacon's office. These adaptations will be considered for residents who permanently reside in the house.

LODGERS

Q. If I which to have a lodger living with me at the house, what do I do?
A. The adopted Diocesan policy is as follows:

Some clergy living in a house of residence like to have a lodger in the same house. Please note that income from these lodgers could potentially be taxable. There are several considerations to be reviewed:

- Office holders (except incumbents) must consult the diocesan housing provider before considering hosting lodgers.
- Some tenancy agreements, mortgage companies or local authority housing licences may restrict the occupants' entitlement to allow others to occupy the house.
- Clergy should consider the safety of members of the public visiting the official house.
- Consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding team is recommended, especially for vulnerable lodgers or if any of the members of the clergy household would be considered vulnerable.
- Office holders should have written agreements with lodgers, specifying ground rules and termination provisions. These agreements cover room occupancy and shared facilities (e.g., sitting room, bathroom, kitchen).

SUB LETTING

Q. Can I sublet any part of the house or outbuildings whilst I am living at the house?
A. The Diocesan policy does not allow use of any outbuildings by the Parish or any other body, or grant any rights of way across the grounds without consulting the Property Director. Experience has shown that this may cause serious pastoral or legal problems in the future. An occupational agreement is available on request from the Property Director for those wishing to sublet part of their house

COMPLAINTS

Q. Who do I approach if I wish to make a complain about a Property Department staff member or a contractor?
A. In the unlikely event of you needing to make a complaint then for staff member please follow the Diocesan Staff Complaints Procedure or contact the Property Department if there is a concern about a contractor.

CONTACT DETAILS

Q. Who do I contact at the Diocesan offices to report/discuss an issue with the parsonage house?
A. Report any issues to Surveyors Department at Church House Oxford using following contact details:

Diocese of Oxford Property Department
Church House, Oxford
Langford Locks
Kidlington
Oxon
OX5 1GF
T: 01865 208200
E: property.maintenance@oxford.anglican.org