



# **A Guide to the Upkeep of Houses 2008**

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## CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Following a lot of work by the Diocesan Surveyor and the Houses Department staff, and liaison with their counterparts in the Diocese of Newcastle, the Fifth Edition of "A Guide to the Upkeep of Houses" has been produced.

The aim of the "Handbook" is to be a point of reference for Houses Committee policy regarding the upkeep and care of Parsonage Houses and other Diocesan owned properties in the Diocese of Durham. (The Houses Committee is responsible for the housing all of clergy and licensed lay workers of the Diocese, whether the house in question is a benefice, glebe or corporate property).

Within this Handbook is a statement of the current policies and guidelines of the Houses Committee on a range of uses, arranged alphabetically by topic for ease of use. There is also a quick reference guide on pages 44-46. In setting out the expectations which the Houses Committee has of occupiers/parishes, and the expectations occupiers/parishes can have of the Houses Committee, responsibilities become clearer. In the context of the partnership of care which exists (between the Diocesan Houses Department, the occupier and, where applicable, the parish) this clarity of responsibilities can only serve to aid better understanding and encourage good communication between us as partners.

Should you have any query or concern in relation to a Housing issue, in the first instance please contact the Houses Department at the Diocesan Office (see page 5). The staff are there to help, and are happy to do so. They have a wealth of experience on which we can all draw.

If you would like to discuss with me, as Chairman, any matter regarding the policies of the Houses Committee, you will find my details on page 40.

The Houses Committee is very grateful for the co-operation and effort of all involved in the care of our Diocesan Housing stock – our thanks go to clergy, lay-workers and their families, to Churchwardens and PCCs, and not least to the staff of the Diocesan Houses Department, for the part they all play in ensuring that our houses can properly fulfil their role in support of the ministry and mission of the Church in this Diocese of Durham.

With all good wishes,

The Revd Alan Milne  
Chairman of the Houses Committee

December 2007

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***The following guidance has been prepared to answer some of the typical questions from clergy and occupiers of diocesan houses regarding their homes and covers the most common housing issues.***

***For the purpose of this document any references to occupier/occupant means all those who are occupying the house whether it be a clergy member, sector minister or tenant.***

**Accidental Damage:** Damage caused to the property by the occupants: Where accidental damage occurs the Diocese will effect repair and claim against the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group policy. However, the occupier will be liable for the policy excess – currently £200. The cost of any repair less than £200 will be borne locally, i.e. by the occupier.

**Air Bricks and Damp Proof Courses:** The majority of houses will include a damp proof course. To avoid encouraging dampness internally please ensure that, where possible, no earth is above the damp course and that earth and vegetation or any other material is prevented from blocking air bricks. Walls should be kept clear of earth to a depth of about 6" (150mm) below the damp course.

**See also: Appendix E: Advice on Reducing Condensation (p. 36)**

**Alterations:** Under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 **NO** additions or alterations may be made to a parsonage, or any other diocesan owned property, without the prior written consent of the Houses Committee.

**See also: Fixtures and Fittings (p. 11)**

**Artex and Textured Finishes:** These can contain asbestos, and the Houses Department must be notified before any work, other than simple decoration, to these areas is planned or carried out.

**See also: Decorations: internal (p. 9)**

**Bathrooms:** When necessary, the Houses Committee will improve bathrooms. Normally consideration is only given to this as vacancies occur or at the time of quinquennial inspection. Every home should be equipped with a shower and these are often fitted over the bath. To avoid problems of dampness, it is advisable to check seals around the bath and shower trays on a regular basis and ensure shower curtains operate correctly to avoid spillage.

**Boilers:** The Houses Committee has in place arrangements for the annual servicing of gas fired boilers and the twice annual servicing of oil fired boilers. This is a statutory requirement and as custodian, occupants should make every effort to afford the contractor access. If servicing has not taken place as intended, or is not satisfactory, the Houses Department should be advised as soon as possible to implement further measures.

***It is essential that any room ventilators within a room are not obstructed.***

**See also: For emergencies outside office hours**

(e.g. boiler not working; no hot water; major leaks etc (p. 41)

**See also: Gas Installation** (p. 12)

**See also: Heating** (p. 13)

**See also: Appendix G: Carbon Monoxide Poisoning** (p. 39)

**Book shelving:** The Houses Committee normally provides up to 30m of book shelving to studies.

**Carpets and Floor coverings:** The Houses Committee provides vinyl floor covering in kitchens, utility rooms, cloakrooms and bathrooms. Vinyl floor coverings are renewed as and when appropriate by the Diocese. All other floor coverings are the responsibility of the occupier. Occupiers must not remove or physically adhere any coverings to floors without first receiving authority from the Houses Department.

**See also: Resettlement grants** (p. 18)

**Cat-flaps:** The Diocese strongly advises against the installation of such items, based on consultation with Crime Prevention Officers/Insurers. These elements DO weaken the structure of any door into which they are installed. Written assurances from the local Crime Prevention Officer regarding security need to be obtained so that insurance companies can be notified of the intent to install such equipment. These must only be fitted after written approval has been obtained from the Houses Committee and should not exceed (H)22.4 x (W)22.4cm. The occupier must undertake to meet the cost of installation and reinstatement on vacating the house. If it is not reinstated the Bishop reserves the right to order works to be carried out and for the cost to be recovered.

**See also: Pets** (p. 17)

**Chimneys and Flues:** The regular sweeping of chimneys used for open fires, or for any solid fuel burning stove, is essential as blocked chimneys or flues can be fatal. Chimney fires can cause great damage to the house and unnecessary inconvenience to the occupiers. The Houses Committee will only arrange and pay for all chimneys and flues to be swept during quinquennial or ingoing works. It is the occupier's responsibility to arrange annual sweeping of chimneys and flues, with the cost to be met locally. Failure to do this may compromise the diocesan buildings insurance.

**See also Appendix G: Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:** (p. 39)

**Cookers:** These are not provided by the Diocese. Their provision and installation is the responsibility of the occupier. Free-standing cookers are recommended so that they can be easily installed and removed at the time of moving house. The Diocese will provide a standard space of 600mm. It is a statutory requirement that a cooker chain be fitted to free-standing cookers. The cost of this will be met by the Houses Committee. The arranging and cost of installation, connection service/maintenance is the responsibility of the occupier. The diocesan contractor will only inspect cookers as part of the annual gas service, but the cost of any repairs identified or service will be the responsibility of the occupier. Requests for larger spaces to accommodate non-standard cookers will be considered where an occupier meets all costs of the works and reinstatement when vacating.

**Integral kitchen appliances:** Where these have been provided, normally in a “bought-in” house, because of the style of the kitchen, repairs and maintenance will be the responsibility of the Houses Committee. The Committee reserves the right to remove these and replace with space only for a free-standing appliance and will normally do so upon total failure of an appliance. The provision of the replacement cooker will be the responsibility of the occupier.

**Cookers - Gas fired:** These will be inspected for compliance with Safety Regulations at the time of the annual gas test. This is free of charge to occupiers. If faults are identified by the diocesan retained engineer, the occupier will be responsible for meeting all costs incurred for the fault identification, and if appropriate, rectification. The Houses Committee regrets it cannot assist with the cost of repairing or replacing cookers which are the responsibility of the occupier.

**Cookers - Agas:** These are serviced annually by Walter Dix or a nominated contractor. The Houses Committee will meet the reasonable cost of servicing and maintenance but reserves the option of removing and not replacing the cooker boiler in the event of major expense being likely.

**Consequential redecoration:** Following certain works to diocesan properties i.e. rewiring, there may be justification for carrying out redecoration works. This will vary from case to case and will need to be assessed by the Diocesan Surveyor who will then decide on what percentage of grant towards decoration should be given, if any. Example 1: where window replacement is carried out, consequential redecoration will only be considered where damage extends beyond the window reveal. Example 2: where electrical rewire causes several areas of damage within one room, consequential redecoration may be considered and assessed by the Diocesan Surveyor. Where an existing room is painted (emulsion) the occupier will be able to choose colours (or magnolia). Where the wallpaper is existing this will be replaced in a similar wallpaper for which a grant may be available (see Appendix A – p. 23). The grants will be given on a claim basis upon sight of receipts. Where decoration is approved, only the minimum will be carried out and the Houses Committee reserves the right to remove papers and finish in emulsion paint only the affected area. The Houses Committee will be responsible for all insurable events i.e. structural movement, fire or flood through their insurers.

**See also: Ingoing Decoration Grants (p. 14)**

**Council Tax:** Normally council tax in respect of the occupation of the parsonage house by a minister of religion is paid from the Diocesan Office. Occupiers should refer correspondence regarding council tax to the Diocesan Office without delay. Council tax is not due when a house is temporarily unoccupied pending reoccupation by a minister of religion. When occupation is shared with lodgers or persons over the age of 18, the Diocesan Office should be informed as this can alter the amount of council tax which is payable. When houses are let, tenants are responsible for council tax.

**Decorations: External:** The Houses Committee will arrange for the external decoration of the house including its outbuildings, fences etc to be painted, stained or treated with preservative as appropriate, as part of the quinquennial works.

**Decorations: Internal:** Occupants are responsible for internal redecoration of their homes. If work is carried out by volunteers, care should be taken to ensure that they work safely within their capabilities and to an acceptable standard. It is preferable that all decorations, especially woodwork, be kept to neutral colours. The Houses Committee expects internal decorations to be kept up to a reasonable standard.

**Disabled Access:** The Houses Committee ensures that a house is provided as a home for an incumbent and their family. Many incumbents decide to utilise their home for meetings or other events, but this is simply at their own discretion. Consequently, compliance to section 21 of The Disability Discrimination Act 1996 (DDA) is the duty of the service provider i.e. the incumbent. If an incumbent, or an immediate family member, who is living in the house, is or becomes disabled, the Houses Committee will undertake the necessary adaptation works in consultation with Social Services and, if necessary, Occupational Therapists.

**Doorbells:** These will be installed on a request basis and repaired or replaced by the Diocese.

**Drains:** Drains will be flushed and checked at the quinquennial inspection. The Houses Committee is responsible for the clearing and repair of blocked drains. It is the responsibility of the occupier to ensure that no unsuitable items are disposed of via sinks, wash hand basins, showers, baths or WCs, and that pipe work to internal sinks and showers are cleaned to prevent blockages. If the cause of the blockage is found to be misuse e.g. large amounts of cooking fat, hair etc, the cost of clearing will be the responsibility of the occupier. The cost of any structural damage caused by tree roots, collapsed drains etc, will be met by the Houses Committee.

**Driveways and Paths:** Occupiers *are responsible for keeping* all paved areas in good repair with weeds removed and drains kept clear of earth, leaves and other obstructions. Any deterioration of the surface should be reported to the Houses Department. "Armillatox", a standard proprietary cleaner is available from garden centres and hardware stores, and can be used for cleaning paths of slime and moss growth. It is environmentally friendly and safe for pets and can be purchased from most hardware stores.

**Electrical Installations and Testing:** Testing will be carried out at or before each quinquennial inspection by NICEIC approved contractors appointed by the Diocese, to maintain at least statutory requirements. Any upgrade identified and authorised by the Diocesan Surveyor, such as additional socket outlets etc, will be carried out at this time. If, between inspections or while work is being carried out, occupiers have any worries regarding the electrical installation they should contact the Houses Department as soon as possible.

**Adapters:** It is advisable to use adapters only as a temporary connection and only if this has an integral fuse.

Where testing or upgrade identifies faults with occupiers' own appliances, they will be responsible for meeting all costs incurred for fault identification and, if appropriate, rectification.

Electricity Supplier: It is essential that the Houses Department is notified of any change to the electricity supplier. Churchwardens should also be informed at the time of vacancy. This will help prevent confusion when the house is reoccupied.

**See also:** *Utility bills* (p. 21)

**Emergency Telephone Numbers: See page 41**

**Environmental Issues:** All the main lofts are insulated with a minimum of 150mm glass fibre roll quilt. The Houses Committee continues to seek ways to improve the energy efficiency and environmental impact of repairs and improvements to the houses in its care. The Durham Diocese is working closely with other dioceses both regionally and nationally to promote and develop environmental policies to embrace its whole operation.

**External Taps:** These will be provided upon written request to the Houses Department but would usually be supplied at QI or other works. Occupiers must ensure that external taps are turned off during the winter months to avoid burst pipes. They are best insulated and within a small box if possible.

**Fences:** When work is required to boundary fences, walls etc., the Houses Department must be consulted first. Responsibility may be with the owner on either side, or it may be shared between them. The Houses Department will check this. If responsibility is with the parsonage, or partly with the parsonage, then the Houses Committee will meet the cost or its share of the cost. It is, however, asked that minor repairs to wooden fences be carried out by the occupier and that they be kept free from debris.

The Houses Committee cannot be responsible for providing 'pet-proof' boundaries. It will be necessary for the occupier to undertake whatever work is necessary to prevent the loss or escape of pets. Written authorisation for any work to boundary fences should first be obtained from the Houses Department.

**See also: Trees** (p. 20)

**See also: Pets** (p. 17)

**Fires: Gas:** The testing of gas fires will be carried out annually to **all** gas fires (regardless of where they are sited and provided they belong to the house) at the time of boiler servicing. Where a gas fire is found to be inadequate or unsafe:

- a) to any room other than the main reception room (lounge) it will be removed and **NOT** replaced;
- b) to the study it will be replaced with an electric slimline wall mounted convector heater. In some cases an electric fire could be fitted to an existing fireplace at the Diocesan Surveyor's discretion;
- c) to the lounge it will be replaced by the Houses Committee.  
Certain fires can be used only in certain situations.

The Houses Committee will meet all costs of the fire installation.

**See also: Appendix G – Carbon Monoxide Poisoning** (p. 39)

**See also: Heating** (p. 13)

**See also: Gas Installation** (p. 12)

**See also: Chimneys and Flues** (p. 7)

**Fire surrounds:** If an occupier wishes to change the surround, written agreement on the design must be obtained from the Houses Committee. The cost of this work will be met by the occupier. Where the Diocese decides to change the fire surround usually at time of QI or other works, the Houses Committee will meet the cost and the occupier may have a choice from a range within the diocesan budget.

**Fixtures and Fittings:** Normally fixtures and fittings are defined as permanent parts of the house, while all loose and free-standing items are the personal property of the occupier. Sometimes confusion can arise when occupiers fix some of their own property to the house and then wish to remove it when they vacate. This practice is accepted on the understanding that the occupier concerned **will make good any damage caused by the fixing and subsequent removal at their own expense.** Any changes to the fabric, fixtures or fittings e.g. removal of plaster mouldings etc, must not proceed without written agreement from the Houses Committee.

Curtain battens will be supplied and fitted by the Houses Committee. Curtain tracks are the responsibility of the occupier. Occupier's own fixtures, fittings or appliances should be covered under their own house contents policy which must cover damage to the fabric of the house. Where occupiers install their own light fittings, the existing ones, or a suitable replacement, must be reinstated on leaving. Recent changes to building regulations require that when light fittings are replaced within a bathroom or kitchen, a specific type is required and should be installed by a qualified contractor. The Houses Committee will not usually purchase any fixtures or fittings left by an outgoing occupier. Any changes to the fabric, fixtures or fittings of a house e.g. removal of plaster mouldings etc, should not be carried out by occupiers until written agreement from the Houses Committee has been obtained.

**See also: Internal Light Fittings** (p. 15)

**Garage doors:** The repair of garage doors is the responsibility of the Diocese. (Accidental damage will be the responsibility of the occupier). If renewal is necessary, the door will be replaced by the Diocese with a standard door. It is not diocesan policy to fit electrically operated garage doors. However, where these already exist, repair and maintenance will be diocesan responsibility. Replacement batteries for remote controls are the responsibility of the occupier. Occupiers are asked to spray the garage door mechanical components with WD40 on an annual basis.

**Gardens:** There is no Committee money for the improvement or maintenance of gardens except when a new house is provided and then there may be a once and for all provision. Gardens and hedges are the responsibility of the occupier and should be kept in good order by the occupier. It is advisable that hedges are maintained to a manageable size no higher than 2m. During a vacancy, it is the responsibility of the parochial church council and churchwardens to carry out or arrange for garden maintenance locally.

There are certain tax concessions available to **clergy** for expenditure on garden maintenance. The appropriate form is sent to clergy each year in respect of this and is combined with the form for tax allowance on heating, lighting and cleaning of their parsonage house. Further information can be obtained from the Diocesan Finance Department.

**See also: Ivy** (p. 16)

**Gas Installation:** The Committee has in place arrangements for annual testing of the gas installation including all appliances in the house. The testing will usually coincide with the servicing of any gas fired boiler. Work to the gas installation and to gas appliances may only be carried out by CORGI registered contractors. This is both Committee policy and a statutory requirement. The occupier must afford access to the contractor. Cost of servicing/maintenance of boilers is the responsibility of the Houses Committee.

**See also: Cookers** (p. 7)

**See also: Fires** (p. 10)

**See also: Appendix G: Carbon Monoxide Poisoning** (p. 39)

**Gas Leak:** If there is suspicion of a gas leak the following procedure should be followed:

1. Extinguish all naked flames. Do not switch on or off any electric lights or appliances, the spark in the switch can cause an explosion.
2. If possible turn off the gas supply at the mains. This is usually next to the meter itself.
3. Ensure good ventilation by opening doors and windows wide.
4. Contact the Gas Board – **Freephone 0800 111 999** (24 hour service). The Gas Board will normally disconnect the supply until others have resolved the problem, or carry out the work free of charge.
5. During office hours this will involve telephoning the Houses Department at the Diocesan Office. At other times help should be sought from the contractor engaged to service the boiler and testing the gas installation. If this is not possible, then assistance may be sought from any CORGI registered contractor or, in the last resort, from the Gas Board.

**Gas Supplier:** It is essential that the Houses Department is notified of any change to the gas supplier. Churchwardens should also be informed at the time of vacancy. This will help prevent confusion when the house is reoccupied.

**See also: Utility bills** (p. 21)

**Glazing:** In the event of a broken window during office hours, the occupier should contact the Houses Department. Out of office hours please contact one of the contractors listed at the back of this handbook (p. 41), or any other reputable local contractor.

If damage has occurred as the result of vandalism or break-in, the police should be contacted. The police may be able to organise emergency boarding up. Occupiers should keep a record of the date/time of any incident and the crime number provided by the Police. Windows should only be replaced with toughened glass if there is a problem with repeated vandalism/break-in or on grounds of safety (i.e. in or adjacent to a door at low level). Accidental damage is the responsibility of the occupier.

**See also: Accidental Damage** (p. 6)

**See also: Insurance of Houses** (p. 15)

**Green Guide:** The Church Commissioners publish a book on parsonage ideals and good practice, commonly known as "*The Green Guide*". The Houses Committee works with the guide but the existing diocesan housing stock is diverse and it is not realistic to expect all parsonages to comply exactly to the latest edition of *The Green Guide*.

**Greenhouses, Garden Sheds and Conservatories:** The Houses Committee does not provide greenhouses, garden sheds or conservatories. Where they already exist, maintenance liability will be a major factor on whether or not to retain. The Diocese reserves the right to remove any such structure without replacement.

**See also: Repairs: External** (p. 17)

**Gutters clearance etc:** All gutters, hoppers, down pipes, gullies and drains should be inspected and cleaned of debris on an annual basis. It is the responsibility of the occupier (Parochial Church Council during a vacancy) to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for this to be carried out. The work should only be carried out safely by competent persons experienced in ladder use. Arrangements are often made with window cleaners who may be able to clean gutters for a small fee. If a local contractor is not known the Houses Department will be able to recommend a contractor. During a quinquennial inspection clearing of gutters etc., will be carried out by the Diocese as part of the quinquennial works. Blocked gutters etc can cause penetrating dampness which can have a dramatic effect on the deterioration of the internal finishes and timberwork, even leading to dry rot. The occupier may be charged for repairs needed as a direct result of failing to ensure that this work is carried out annually.

**Heating and Radiators:** The Houses Committee provides all houses in its care with full central heating plus an independent heat source in the lounge and one in the study. This consists of a gas fire in the lounge and an electric wall mounted convector heater in the study. At present, it is policy to provide an immersion heater and an electrically heated shower. As the Diocese is continually renewing traditional boilers with condensing boilers, immersion heaters will be discarded. Where there is an additional heat source to another room (dining room) this will be maintained through its life. However, if this is found to be defective or obsolete the Diocese retains the right to remove the appliance without replacement.

Radiators do not burn gas, therefore, turning radiators off will not save money. In fact it will probably increase fuel costs as this creates cold draughts in the house because cold air is heavy and hot air is light. If an upstairs room is not heated, then the cold air will fall down the stairs and into the warmest room.

When bleeding radiators, make sure the central heating is in the “off” position, place your bleed key on the bleed nipple (this will be at the top, at one side only and could even be at the back, but usually is at one end). Turn the bleed key ½ a turn anti clockwise to shut it off (do not over tighten). If you have a sealed system then the pressure will probably need topping up to one bar. (If there is not a gauge on or near the boiler, then this instruction will not apply).

**See also: Boilers** (p. 6)

**See also: Fires** (p. 10)

**Hedges:** It is the responsibility of the occupier to maintain at a manageable size as part of their garden care. This includes Lleylandii. It is advisable that hedges are maintained to a manageable size no higher than 2m. During a vacancy, it is the responsibility of the parochial church council and churchwardens to carry out or arrange for garden maintenance locally.

**See also: Gardens** (p. 11)

**House for Duty:** When a house is being offered on the basis of house for duty different rules apply. Repair and maintenance issues are dealt with by the Houses Department in the usual way. Please contact the Diocesan Secretary regarding agreement and guidelines.

**Improvement Works:** The Diocese may wish to make improvements to a property and will look to carry these works out at the time of QI or ingoing works, e.g. bathroom, kitchen or window replacement. The Diocese may receive requests to execute ingoing works at which point the Diocese will review this. Generally, however, all such works will be minimal. Any major works will be attended to at QI in accordance with programmed improvements.

**Infestation:** i.e. bees, flies, wasps, mice, rats etc. The Houses Department should be advised of the problem and the occupier should contact the Local Authority Environmental Department to arrange to have this dealt with. The diocese cannot accept responsibility for meeting any costs for such work. The diocese will, however, bear the cost of removing access and egress points used by rodents etc.

**See also: Pets** (p. 17)

**Ingoing Decoration Grants:** At the time of moving into a diocesan property (clergy only), the Committee may make a fixed grant towards ingoing decorations (see appendix A – p. 23). This sum may be spent by the PCC in consultation with the new incumbent.

For tax reasons it is advisable that these monies be paid over to the PCC or alternatively to the prospective occupant of the property before he/she is licensed to the parish/post.

**Insulation:** All lofts should be insulated. Most lofts already have fibreglass quilt insulation to a minimum depth of 150mm.

**See also: Environment** (p. 10)

**Insurance of Houses:** The Houses Committee insures the parsonages buildings together with their fixtures and fittings for standard risk **including third party claims**. Any damage or any claim for compensation should be reported immediately to the Houses Department who will be able to advise and who will, if appropriate, notify the insurers. For claims resulting from accidental damage the excess charge (currently £200) will be borne locally.

Household contents are the responsibility of the occupier. It is important that they make their own arrangements for the insurance of their personal possessions. TV aerials which are owned by the Diocese are insured under the house policy. Any aerials owned by occupiers will need to be covered on their own house contents policy.

**The Diocese strongly advises and expects that all occupants will put in place adequate insurance cover for their own house contents.**

**See also: Accidental Damage** (p. 6)

**Instruction to Contractors:** When contractors are working under the supervision of the Property Manager/Diocesan Surveyor, or some other appointed architect, surveyor or engineer, clergy and PCC officers should **not** attempt to raise matters directly with representatives of that firm but should immediately address concerns to the Houses Department. The cost of work not authorised may be charged to the occupier or to the PCC.

**Internal Light Fittings:** The Diocese only provides pendant, batten and fluorescent light fittings. All other are the responsibility of the occupier. Where light fittings are changed during occupancy, the original fitting, or a suitable replacement, must be reinstated before vacancy.

Fluorescent lights: It is the responsibility of the occupier to supply and fit new tubes and starter motors in the event of failure.

**Intruder Alarm Systems:** Over recent years the Houses Committee has been engaged on a rolling programme to provide and maintain intruder alarms in the houses in its care. A grant is available to those occupiers/PCCs who continue to pay for alarm maintenance i.e. where alarms were fitted prior to the current policy, and they can seek reimbursement of up to £50 by sending copy of the invoice to the Houses Department. The Committee does not provide or maintain monitored systems (e.g. Redcare). If you have any questions about the alarm maintenance system please contact the Houses Department. Upon vacation, a churchwarden and the Houses Department should be informed of any code number. Please note that replacement batteries for remote controls are the responsibility of the occupier.

**Invoices: Payment of:** Invoices for authorised work organised locally should be passed promptly to the Houses Department (within 28 days) with a note confirming that the work has been carried out satisfactorily together with clear written advice on who requires reimbursement e.g. contractor, PCC or occupier. Reimbursement will not be made retrospectively.

**Ivy:** It is often the case that shrubbery is encouraged close to, or even, against the house (ivy). The Diocese does not encourage this activity as it can create problems with the house structure. It can also create problems when carrying out maintenance work. As a general rule the Diocese advises all occupants to avoid this, or where there are preferences for this, it **must** be maintained by the occupier. It is recommended that these plants should not be encouraged beyond 2m in height beyond which maintenance becomes difficult. Where such plants are encouraged to grow by an occupier, and requires maintenance work to prevent damage, the Diocese will remove it and recover the cost from the occupier.

**Kitchens:** When necessary the Houses Committee will improve kitchens. Normally consideration is only given to this as vacancies occur or at the time of the quinquennial inspection. (See appendix B – pp. 24-25 - Care of Kitchen Units).

**See also: Cookers** (p. 7)

**Letting Policy:** It is diocesan policy that all housing subject to impending vacancy should be considered for letting. Having a property let during a vacancy maintains a degree of security and reduces the parochial church councils and churchwardens responsibilities in caring for a vacant property. All tenancies will normally be either six or twelve month assured shorthold. The Houses Department will contact PCCs/churchwardens prior to any letting to seek their comments on letting and this will be discussed at the outgoing inspection.

**Lettings and Lodgers:** The law governing the letting or leasing of a parsonage house or its grounds is complex. Numerous approvals are required not least that of the Bishop and the Diocesan Registrar. If clergy or PCCs believe there are special circumstances which will make a tenancy or lease inappropriate they should, in the first instance, contact the Secretary to the Houses Committee for advice on procedures. Clergy may take in lodgers but it is courteous and advisable to consult the Secretary to the Houses Committee before doing so.

If any rent is received by an incumbent, this will need to be disclosed for tax purposes. There is also the likelihood that the Council Tax payment, which is paid by the Diocese, could change. Any increase in Council Tax would need to be reclaimed from the incumbent. Again there are legal considerations but in any event at vacancy all lodgers **must** vacate with or before the incumbent.

**Listed Buildings:** Some houses are listed under the Historic Buildings Act 1962 as being of architectural or other interest and are required by law to be kept in good order. Alterations or major repairs, regardless of nature, may require planning permission and Historic Building consent. Listing of a property can relate to all items within the curtilage of the house including the boundary walls and any other garden structure. Occupiers of such buildings should be aware of this. This may also affect internal features or decorations i.e. listed wallpapers, cornices etc. Cat-flaps will not be permitted. It will also influence the type and extent of works that will be permitted, as preservation of original characteristics take precedence.

**Meter Readings:** Upon occupation and vacation of houses occupiers must read and keep a record of all meter readings. This is important for their own protection. Upon vacation churchwardens and the Houses Committee should be informed of the meter readings and of the gas, electric and water suppliers.

It is important that all services are maintained in the name of the Parochial Church Council. The Houses Committee will not be responsible for the payment of any utility bills during a vacancy. Any change of supplier will need to be arranged locally which will include dealing with all final invoices, termination of contract and appointment of new supplier. If the house is to be let, responsibility for the payment of all utility bills will pass to the tenant from the date when the tenancy commences. It will revert back to the PCC when the tenancy terminates.

**See also: Vacating** (p. 21)

**Neglect of House and Garden:** Generally, houses are kept in good condition. On the rare occasions where some properties are left in a poor condition which results in the Houses Committee having to spend unnecessary money, the Bishop reserves the right to have houses reinstated to an acceptable standard and the costs to be recovered from the outgoing occupant and in accordance with the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972.

**Parochial Church Councils/Churchwardens:** PCCs and churchwardens are asked to assist their clergy in their care of the house. Help with smaller jobs can be extremely valuable. During a vacancy there will be an added responsibility to look after the house and garden, and churchwardens will usually be expected to hold the keys. It is beneficial for PCCs to assist in the preparation of the house in readiness for the welcoming of a new incumbent.

**See also: Decoration Internal** (p. 9)

**See also: Gardens** (p. 11)

**See also: Vacancy Notes – Appendix C** (pp. 26-33)

**Pets:** Pets are the sole responsibility of occupiers regarding cleanliness, security and enclosure and must be house-trained. Houses should not be modified, for example by the fitting of cat-flaps without first receiving written approval from the Houses Committee. Occupiers who keep domestic pets may be held liable for any damage which arises as a consequence e.g. scratched doors or floor coverings. Occupiers will be liable to meet all costs of alteration and reinstatement before vacating. Pet related infestation (fleas) should and must be dealt with by the relevant owner of the particular pet. On vacating, any problems of infestation arising remain the outgoing occupier's responsibility. The Bishop reserves the right to recoup any costs incurred due to neglect.

**See also: Cat-flaps** (p. 7)

**See also: Infestation** (p. 14)

**Repairs:** The Diocese would expect minor repairs to be carried out locally i.e. replacement tap washers. The occupier may be charged for repairs needed as a result of neglecting to report it to the Houses Department.

**External Repairs:** External repairs, agreed by the Houses Committee to be necessary, are the responsibility of the Committee. The Committee in consultation with the occupiers concerned, reserves the right of discretion to remove unnecessary items and demolish superfluous buildings where this is agreed to be more appropriate.

**See also: Greenhouses, Garden Sheds and Conservatories** (p. 13)

**Internal Repairs:** The Houses Committee expects occupiers to do simple jobs (e.g. changing tap washers, bath sealant, door handles/catches, bulbs in external security lights etc.) which can be carried out on a DIY basis or by a known local handyman. Care should be taken not to undertake any work which would put people at risk, nor to embark on repairs which are beyond the capabilities of those undertaking the work. Please contact the Houses Department **before** work is put in hand if you are uncertain. Recent changes to building regulations require that when lights or other electrical fittings are replaced within a bathroom or kitchen, a specific type is required and should be installed by a qualified contractor.

The Diocese strongly advises against the following, which are regarded as permanent finishes, without prior written permission from the Houses Committee and the Bishop reserves the right to recover costs to rectify areas where the following has been carried out by the occupant:

- Do not apply Artex or other textured finishes. **See also: Artex** (p. 6)
- Do not paint existing wall tiles. **See also: Tiling** (p. 20)
- Do not paint existing kitchen or utility unit doors. **See also: Kitchens** (p. 16)
- Do not paint fireplaces or other fixtures and fittings. **See also: Fire surrounds** (p. 11)
- Do not glue carpet to vinyl flooring. **See also: Carpets and floor coverings.** (p. 7)

**See also: Appendix F: Periodic Checks for Occupiers** (pp. 37-38)

**Resettlement Grants:** Information on the payment of resettlement grants can be obtained from the P.A. to the Diocesan Secretary. (see Appendix A – p. 23)

**Roofs:** Works to roofs are the responsibility of the Houses Committee. Roofs will be checked by a diocesan contractor at quinquennial inspection and sometimes during other inspections. However, the occupier (and the PCC during vacancy) should ensure that they visually inspect the roof from the ground annually, or if a problem is thought to exist, they should report this to the Houses Department immediately.

**Safety and Security:** This is a major issue and concerns everyone. It is widely acknowledged that clergy can be particularly vulnerable, often living in houses that are somewhat isolated and therefore more vulnerable than is the norm. The Diocese is addressing this issue by the ongoing process of upgrading security accessories to houses such as locks etc. to Approved British Standards. Security light timer switches will be fitted as part of the quinquennial works. The Diocese is, therefore, of the opinion that the installation of any item that may bridge or lessen the security of a property should be avoided. Cat-flaps unquestionably weaken doors. They are not necessarily of sufficient quality to prevent their removal quite easily. They may provide access points for intruders. Occupiers concerned about security are advised to contact the Houses Department who will be able to offer guidance. Local Crime Prevention Officers will also be able to give advice.

It is important that a clear field of vision is maintained around a property by ensuring that shrubs and hedges have a maximum growth height of 1.5-2m, while trees do not have branches below a height of 2m. It is accepted that this is flexible and to individual preferences.

**See also: Appendix D: Fire and Security** (pp. 34-35)

**Security Lighting:** Externally, houses should be well lit for convenience and safety and to help with security. Each house is different and what is required will depend upon local circumstances, the position of the house, the closeness or otherwise of street lighting etc. Where necessary the Houses Committee will meet the cost of automatically operated external lights controlled with passive infra red sensors.

**The cost of replacing and fitting security light bulbs will, however, be the occupant's responsibility.** If a fitting is not working the Houses Department will arrange for a contractor to call. However, should it only be the bulb which requires replacing, the whole of the electrician's costs will be met by the occupier. Consideration to the installation of security lights will normally be given as vacancies occur or at the time of the quinquennial inspection. Internal light fittings are fixtures and bulb replacement and provision is the responsibility of the occupier. Where occupiers install their own light fittings, the originals must be reinstated upon leaving. Generally, the Diocese will look to provide one light fitting per elevation as required.

**See also: Intruder Alarm Systems** (p. 15)

**Septic Tanks:** The Houses Committee will meet the cost of emptying septic tanks but arrangements for emptying them should be made locally. Reimbursement will not be paid without sight of invoices.

**Showers:** The normal provision is an instantaneous electric shower over the bath but some houses, for various reasons, have other arrangements. Curtains and shower doors must be properly positioned to avoid water spilling onto floors. All seals or tiling should be regularly checked and any defects reported to the Houses Department early before significant water damage can occur. Minor repairs such as re-sealing should be undertaken locally.

**Signs/Vicarage Nameplates:** If these are required, arrangement for supply and fitting should be made locally. A grant of up to £15 is available from the Houses Department on sight of invoices.

**Smoke Alarms:** Battery operated smoke alarms are fitted to all houses. Maintenance of these, and the replacement of the batteries, is the responsibility of the occupier. These are now being replaced by the Diocese with hardwired smoke alarms at the time of the quinquennial inspection. Hardwired smoke alarms are fitted with a back-up battery and the testing and replacement of these batteries is the responsibility of the occupier. **Remember smoke alarms are there to save lives**

**Stop taps:** Occupiers should ensure that they and their families know the location of stop taps so that in the event of an emergency (i.e. burst pipes) water can be turned off immediately. It is recommended that if it is in a difficult location, or within a kitchen unit, easy access is maintained.

**Storage of Caravans:** The policy of the Diocese is that the storage of caravans or similar vehicles is the occupier's responsibility. The Diocese cannot guarantee that a diocesan house will have an area suitable for caravan storage. If a particular site is suitable, that may be a bonus, but there will be no modification of a site for that purpose by the Diocese.

**Telephones:** The initial installation of a telephone is the responsibility of the Houses Committee. Three sockets and two handsets are usually provided at the time of ingoing. Rental charges, repair, maintenance and replacement of the instruments is the responsibility of the occupier or of the PCC as locally agreed. The Committee is not responsible for installing, maintaining or providing extra points for answering machines, computers, or other office, electrical and electronic equipment. During vacancy, the charge for line rental will be the responsibility of the PCC.

**It is important that occupiers do not have the telephone disconnected when vacating.** Some telephone companies make a charge for reconnection which would have to be met locally.

**Telephone line arrangements during a vacancy/tenancy:** The procedure to be followed by the PCC when a house is to be vacated or tenanted is as follows:

- Contact BT on 0800 800 150 (or other company) to make arrangements for their “Caller Redirect” service.
- Caller Redirect will allow calls to a diocesan property to be redirected to someone in the parish e.g. churchwarden or parish office.
- The tenant will then have the use of the house line but with a different telephone number. The tenant will be charged for line rental and calls.
- The cost to set this up for a period of six months is approximately £10 per month and will be met by the PCC. They should ensure that bills are in the name of the PCC. Please note that BT offer a 3, 6 or 12 month contract and it should be made clear at the start of any contract with the telephone company, which option is preferred by the PCC.
- The tenant will be required to contact BT to obtain a telephone number for the diocesan property.
- On reoccupation by an incumbent, the PCC will need to cancel “Caller Redirect”. BT will provide a stop order reference number.

Any change of supplier will need to be arranged locally which will include dealing with all final invoices, termination of contract and appointment of new supplier.

**See also Vacating** (p. 21)

**Thermostatic Radiator Valves:** The diocesan policy is to fit all radiators with controllable thermostatic valves. This is on a rolling programme and is carried out at QI. It will also be carried out as required if a boiler is replaced.

**Tiling:** Ceramic tiling, once applied, becomes a permanent feature. Permission from the Houses Committee should therefore be sought prior to this work proceeding locally. Please do not paint any wall or floor tiling without authority from the Houses Department.

**Trees:** Trees will be inspected at quinquennial inspection and any works identified will be carried out. Advice and written permission should always be sought from the

Houses Department before any tree is planted or replaced. Trees, when placed near to buildings, can cause severe and very expensive structural damage. There are regulations in force concerning trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders and trees in Conservation Areas. These are strictly enforced by the local authority whose written consent is required before any tree work is carried out, even if the tree is diseased or dead.

Unauthorised lopping or felling, or the causing of damage to a tree, will result in a fine and can cause much ill-feeling. Any fines/costs arising from unlawful work will be the responsibility of the occupier. Normally when work to trees is required the Houses Department will appoint a specialist contractor who will be required to consult with the local planning authority before proceeding.

**TV Aerials, Cable TV, and/or Satellite Receivers:** TV aerials are normally owned by the Diocese and, for the purposes of insurance, will form part of the fixtures and fittings of a house. However, if an aerial is installed by the occupier, this should be covered by their own house contents insurance. Occupiers should consult the Houses Department before installing a satellite dish. They should also bear in mind that planning permission is required and will not normally be granted for dishes on Listed buildings. It is an offence not to apply for Listed building consent. The installation of any of the above should only be carried out by reputable contractors.

**See also: Insurance of Houses** (p. 15)

**Unauthorised Works:** Any costs for the repair of unauthorised works will be the responsibility of the occupier under the terms of the RBBM Annex D Summary of Main Duties and Rights as follows:

“The Diocese considers any representations received, and if consent is refused, serves notice requiring restoration of unauthorised additions or alterations. It has the right to take proceedings to enforce claim and recover costs if necessary.”

“The incumbent has to restore parsonage to original condition (or to such standard as may be agreed with the Board) and pay any associated costs.”

**Utility Bills:** If services are used by contractors during works to a house, neither the Diocese nor the contractor will cover these costs. The costs are deemed negligible and will be met locally and not by the Houses Department. Any change of supplier will need to be arranged locally which will include dealing with all final invoices, termination of contract and appointment of new supplier. If the house is to be let, responsibility for the payment of all utility bills will pass to the tenant from the date when the tenancy commences. It will revert back to the PCC when the tenancy terminates.

**Vacating:** The Houses Department will contact the outgoing incumbent prior to their departure to arrange for the Archdeacon, Diocesan Surveyor, Churchwarden and Area Dean to carry out an outgoing visit. Where it has been agreed that a house is to be let, a visit by the diocesan agents will also be arranged so that they can prepare letting particulars. A vacancy checklist (see Appendix C – pp. 26-33) will be provided prior to that visit or can be obtained upon request from the Houses Department. The checklist gives advice to outgoing occupiers and churchwardens on procedures to be followed at a vacancy.

**See also: Neglect of House and Garden** (p. 17)

**Washing Line Poles:** The provision of these is the responsibility of the Houses Committee and will be supplied upon request as necessary. Rotary airers will not be provided by the Houses Committee, however, it is recognised that some occupiers may wish to install them. Occupiers are asked to ensure that all rotary airers are fitted in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.

**Water Meters:** A standing charge is payable where water meters are fitted. This charge is the responsibility of the occupier/Parochial Church Council. When a house is vacant the standing charge will remain the responsibility of the PCC.

**Water Rates:** When a parsonage house is occupied by an incumbent, the Parochial Church Council is responsible for the payment of water rates. If a house is occupied by a full-time sector minister, the rates are met from the Diocesan Office. Where the sector minister has some duties within the parish, e.g. 40%, the Diocese will meet 60% and the parish 40% of the water rates. Tenants occupying any diocesan owned property are responsible for the whole payment of water rates. Responsibility will revert back to the PCC once a tenancy terminates.

PCCs must notify the appropriate authority of the date when a house is vacated. Usually, provided no water is being used and the property contains no furnishings, charges for water services may be waived. However, this may vary locally. A rebate may also be due. In the event of the Diocese carrying out major works requiring water services the supply should be maintained during a vacancy for use by contractors. Water rates will be due during this period and will be payable by the PCC.

It is now Northumbrian Water's policy that charges for water and sewerage services remain in full unless Northumbrian Water has turned off the supply of water at the mains at a customer's request. It will be necessary to contact Northumbrian Water to have the supply reconnected prior to the heating and water system being re-commissioned.

**See also: Utility bills** (p. 21)

**Whitegoods:** Plumbing for dishwashers, washing machines, and vents for tumble-dryers (if space permits) will be provided at Houses Committee expense and where designated by the Property Manager/Diocesan Surveyor. The occupier is responsible for the installation and connection costs of all white goods. The Houses Department will make every effort to try to accommodate an occupier's white goods in the kitchen or utility but unfortunately it cannot significantly adapt or refurbish these rooms for the purpose of accommodating any particular appliances. Repairs to appliances are the responsibility of the occupier.

Where damage is caused to the structure or house contents by a faulty appliance or poorly fitted flexible pipes, the occupier will be responsible for any costs incurred. Where the damage is resultant from fixed plumbing, the Diocese will be responsible.

**THESE POLICIES HAVE BEEN REVIEWED AND AGREED BY THE HOUSES COMMITTEE AND ARE IMPLEMENTED THROUGH THE HOUSES DEPARTMENT. WHERE A DEVIATION FROM POLICY CONTAINED IN THIS HANDBOOK IS REQUESTED, WRITTEN REQUEST SHOULD BE MADE TO THE HOUSES COMMITTEE**

## **Appendix A**

### **Grants**

**Consequential Redecoration** – The Committee will pay a maximum of £7.50 per roll of wallpaper.

**Ingoing Decoration Grant** – A grant is available upon written request to the Diocesan Secretary's Personal Assistant, Diocesan Office, Auckland Castle, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7QJ. The grant is currently £300 per house and the rate is reviewed annually.

**Resettlement Grants:** These are available upon written request to the Diocesan Secretary's Personal Assistant, Diocesan Office, Auckland Castle, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7QJ. Rates are reviewed annually.

## Appendix B

### CARE OF KITCHEN UNITS

#### **Doors & Drawer Fronts (Melamine and Foil wrapped)**

These should be wiped clean with a cloth dampened with water containing a mild detergent. Avoid over wetting.

Do not use any abrasive cleaning agents, acid, bleaches, petrol or solvents. Similarly do not use scouring pads, wire wool or any similar cleaning aids.

#### **Wood Doors & Drawer Fronts**

Wood and veneer have been used in the manufacture of these doors and drawer fronts. The lacquered finish gives a tough hard wearing surface but, nevertheless, any spillage should be wiped away immediately, following which a wipe over with a damp cloth will restore the former finish. When thoroughly dry, a soft cloth and a final polish with a good household furniture polish will preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the wood.

Slight scratches and abrasions should be treated with a suitable proprietary wood-repair product.

#### **Drawer Boxes**

**To remove Standard, Beech and Metabox drawer boxes** – Pull out the drawer until it resists. Tip front upwards to disengage the box from the runners.

**To remove drawer boxes with concealed runners** – Pull out the drawer and apply pressure to the buttons to the outer face of the drawer sides. By maintaining pressure continue to pull drawer assembly forward to release from runners.

#### **To clean drawer boxes**

Remove drawers from units and brush to remove loose dirt, etc. Wipe clean with silicone furniture polish or cloth dampened with mild detergent. Avoid harsh, abrasive cleaning materials, solvents and particularly avoid saturating the drawer bottom with water.

#### **Hinges & Drawer Runners**

These should be inspected periodically and any dirt, fluff or grime removed by means of a vacuum cleaner nozzle and flexible hose or soft, dry brush or duster. Lubrication should not normally be necessary. However, household spray polish can be used as a lubricant if required.

## **Interiors of Units**

Brush out any loose dust etc. and clean interior surfaces by means of a silicone furniture polish or cloth dampened with water containing a mild detergent. Polish surfaces with a soft dry duster. As with drawer boxes, avoid any harsh or abrasive cleaning materials and excessive water or any other liquid.

## **Painted Rails**

These may be wiped clean with a cloth dampened with water containing a mild detergent. Do not use an abrasive cleaner, petroleum based cleaners or solvent based products.

## **Worktops**

Most everyday stains may be removed by wiping with a cloth dampened with water and a mild detergent. Persistent stains can be removed with a mild abrasive cleaner, but harsh scouring powders should be avoided.

Stains on textured worktops are best removed using a household spray type cleaner and a nylon bristled hand brush moved in a circular fashion. Afterwards wipe clean with a damp cloth.

Certain chemicals and strong dyes can cause damage and discolouration. Spillage of such things as beetroot juice, concentrated fruit juice, dye, shoe polish, chemicals, etc. should be mopped or wiped off and thorough cleaning commenced immediately.

## **Stainless Steel Sinks**

Your sink should be washed with warm soapy water, wiped dry and then buffed with a soft cloth to restore the polished surface.

Undiluted disinfectant and bleaches spilled on your sink will leave a permanent stain if not removed immediately. Wash off immediately and clean area with plenty of water containing a mild detergent. Do not use any harsh abrasives or scouring powders.

### VACANCY NOTES OUTGOING INCUMBENT/OCCUPIER

#### Introduction

When a vacancy is announced there are certain requirements and responsibilities for those parties involved i.e. the outgoing occupant, the PCC/Churchwardens, and the Diocesan Office. It is hoped that those parties involved will work together ensuring that all duties and responsibilities are met.

The following notes should be used to assist in the preparation of the house for vacancy.

Further guidance can be found in '**A Guide to the Upkeep of Houses**', and by contacting the Houses Department, during office hours, Tel: 01388 604515.

Please complete the checklist attached to these notes and return it to the **Diocesan Office**.

#### Incumbent's Responsibilities

##### 1. House and Garden

The house (including the loft), garage and gardens must be entirely cleared of all possessions and left clean, tidy and in good repair. If there are any repairs or items you feel require attention, please raise these during the outgoing visit. Parish equipment should not be left in the house. Items left in an unoccupied house affect the terms of the insurance and water rates will be chargeable.

##### 2. Services/utility suppliers

PLEASE DO NOT DISCONNECT ANY SERVICES OR SUPPLIES.

All meters, including gas, electricity and water, should be read. Please advise the Houses Department of the utility suppliers and final meter readings by completing the attached checklist. All services are to be maintained in the name of the Parochial Church Council and you will need to ensure that the PCC Treasurer is aware of this.

Where oil is in use, levels should be taken and agreed with the Sequestrators and remittance provided for any remaining oil.

##### 3. Keys

Enclosed are two key fobs. Two full sets of keys should be labelled and attached to the key fobs and then passed to the Sequestrators (normally a churchwarden). All other keys should be left with the Sequestrators. Window keys should be left in window locks or on a window sill. Meter keys should be left in a kitchen cupboard/drawer. Please dispose of all obsolete keys to prevent confusion.

##### 4. Security and Alarm

The house should be left as secure as possible with any security problems or concerns identified on the attached checklist. Please inform the keyholder and the Houses Department of the security code for the intruder alarm.

*The outgoing incumbent is advised that the Bishop, in the event of one or more of the above requirements not being met, reserves the right to ensure that the necessary action is taken to meet the requirements and forward any relevant costs on to the outgoing incumbent*

## OUTGOING CHECKLIST

This form is to be completed by the outgoing incumbent/occupant and forwarded to the **Houses Department, Diocesan Office, Auckland Castle, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7QJ**. It is hoped that this will assist the Sequestrators and the Houses Department to attend to any specific items following your departure.

**DIOCESAN REF:**.....

### 1. House and Garden

I have cleared and leave tidy the:

	Please tick	Notes
House		
Loft		
Garage		
Outhouses		
Garden		

### 2. Services/utility suppliers

I have read all the meters and have forwarded the information to the relevant suppliers for:

Gas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electricity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oil	<input type="checkbox"/>

Gas supplier	<input type="text"/>	Final reading	<input type="text"/>
Electricity supplier	<input type="text"/>	Final reading	<input type="text"/>
Water supplier	<input type="text"/>	Final reading	<input type="text"/>
Oil supplier	<input type="text"/>	Final level	<input type="text"/>

Notes:

3. **Keys**

I have labelled and grouped two sets of keys to their particular locks and have passed them to:

Sequestrator:  Name:  Telephone:
--

Notes:
--------

4. **Security and Alarm**

The intruder alarm system code is ..... and I have informed the Sequestrators (keyholder)

Security issues:
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5. **General repairs**

I have listed certain items which I believe need attention or that may be of use to the Houses Committee.

Notes:
--------

Date.....

## **SEQUESTRATORS: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN HOUSE VACANT**

### **Introduction**

The Churchwardens and Area Deans automatically become the Sequestrators under the *Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2000, and the Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976*. The diocesan registrar normally advises the churchwardens and area deans of their duties as Sequestrators. The role of the Sequestrators also includes the maintenance of services, care for the house, and preparation for the arrival of the new incumbent.

During a vacancy, general responsibilities for vacant houses fall upon the Sequestrators (Churchwardens and Area Dean) and the Houses Committee. The role of the Sequestrators, in terms of the house, include two main areas:

- 1) care for the house and garden
- 2) preparation of the house for the arrival of the new incumbent

They are also responsible for all receipts and payments when there is no incumbent, including all expenses incurred by the Sequestrators out of the sequestration account. This includes basic heating, garden upkeep, telephone charges, minor repairs and general maintenance. Please check with the Diocesan Office Accounts Department for details of what can and cannot be paid from the sequestration account.

Please liaise fully with the outgoing incumbent to ensure the following arrangements occur:

### **Outgoing incumbent: responsibilities**

#### **1. House and Garden**

The outgoing family has a duty and is responsible for:

- Leaving the property clean and tidy, including the gardens.
- Removing all personal possessions.

### **Sequestrators: responsibilities**

Any items left in the property will become the responsibility of the Sequestrators for removal and disposal. Items left in unoccupied houses affect the terms of the insurance and water rates will be chargeable.

Arrangements should be made locally for the upkeep of the garden. If there is someone with an interest in gardening, ask them to maintain the garden.

#### **2. Services/utility suppliers**

The Sequestrators should ensure that all services are maintained in the name of the PCC during a vacancy. This applies to gas, electric, water, oil and telephone and will include all costs and standing charges.

**Gas:** obtain details of supplier from outgoing incumbent and ensure final meter reading is taken.

**Electricity:** obtain details of supplier from outgoing incumbent and ensure final meter reading is taken. It is important to maintain the electricity supply to ensure that security alarms/lighting etc remain in working condition.

**Water:** charges will not apply during vacancy if the house is empty of all furniture and equipment except carpets and curtains, **and the water is turned off by the water company.** Please do not turn the water on again. **Northumbrian Water's** policy is now that unless they attend and turn off the supply at the mains, the water charges will still be payable. Northumbrian Water will need to be contacted to reconnect the supply before the heating and water systems can be re-commissioned prior to the house being reoccupied.

**Oil:** check the oil tank level on day of incumbent's departure so that they may be reimbursed for any oil remaining in the tank. This can be paid from the sequestration account. When the house is reoccupied, the new occupier will be responsible for paying for the remaining oil.

**Telephone:** should be diverted through to a number specified by the PCC, to either the parish office or a member of the PCC, ensuring continuity of the business side of the church. The procedure to be followed is:

- ✓ Contact BT on 0800 800 150 to make arrangements for their "Caller Redirect" service.
- ✓ Caller Redirect will allow calls to a Diocesan property to be redirected to someone in the parish eg churchwarden or parish office
- ✓ The tenant will then have the use of the house line but with a different telephone number. The tenant will be charged for line rental and calls
- ✓ The tenant will be required to contact BT to obtain a telephone number for the Diocesan property
- ✓ The cost to set this up for a period of six months is approximately £10 per month. Please check the length of contract with the telephone company. They can vary between 3, 6 and 12 month contracts
- ✓ On reoccupation by an incumbent the PCC will need to cancel "Caller Redirect". BT will provide a stop order reference number
- ✓ Costs for this will be met by the PCC. The PCC should ensure that all bills are in the name of the PCC responsible for the payment.

**It is important that the existing number is not lost.**

It is Houses Committee policy to drain down wet systems unless the PCC has written to the Houses Committee and gained approval to use the house during vacancy and the agreement of the insurers has been secured. It is also a requirement of the insurers that all vacant properties are drained during the months October to March.

If services are used by contractors during works to the property while it is vacant, these costs will be deemed negligible and will be met locally. If the house is tenanted, responsibility for the payment of all utility bills, including water rates, will pass to the tenant from the date when the tenancy commences. Responsibility for payment will revert back to the PCC when the tenancy terminates.

### 3. **Keys**

You will receive all keys for the house from the outgoing incumbent, two sets of which should be labelled. One set should be retained by the Sequestrators. One set of keys should be handed to the Houses Department for use by contractors/agents. Please ensure that keys are not handed out indiscriminately.

### 4. **Security and Alarm**

Ensure that all keyholders know the code for the intruder alarm and how it operates. Frequent visits to an unoccupied house is essential. It is a requirement of the diocesan insurers that houses are visited at twice weekly intervals. The provision of curtains or nets at windows by the PCC, and the use of an occasional light on a timer, gives the impression of occupation.

Crime Prevention Officers also advise that gardens which are well kept assist in the impression of occupation and therefore deter vandalism and intruders. The Sequestrators should arrange for general maintenance of the shrubbery and hedges as well as grass cutting.

Any **damage** or **vandalism** to the house should be reported as soon as possible to the Houses Department during office hours. The police should be contacted and a crime number obtained.

If vandalism becomes a recurring problem, please advise the Houses Department as soon as possible, whereupon consideration will be given to additional security measures.

### 5. **Use of House by PCC**

Occasionally, a parochial church council may wish to make use of a house while it is unoccupied. Written agreement of the Sequestrators, the Houses Committee, and ultimately the Bishop, must be sought. If the PCC wishes to have the water left on, and perhaps make use of the heating system, then the Houses Department will need to advise the insurers. The PCC will meet all costs of any fuel used, standing charges, and any use of electricity whilst the house is temporarily unoccupied, as well as any insurance costs for their possessions whilst using the house. Water rates will be payable by the PCC.

It is appreciated that during a vacancy there are added responsibilities for Sequestrators and PCCs in looking after the house and garden. The Houses Committee is appreciative of all that they do.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Houses Department (**01388 604515**) if there are any concerns regarding the house.

#### **Houses Committee: responsibility**

The Houses Committee may be instructed by the Bishop to let a property during a vacancy. The Houses Committee will seek the consent of the Sequestrators in granting a tenancy relating to the house for an initial period of six months.

The Houses Department, or the diocesan agents, in consultation with the Sequestrators, will be responsible for:

1. Arranging inspection of the house prior to or after vacation has occurred to ensure all parties have executed their responsibilities. The agent will prepare letting particulars, where the Bishop requests a let.
2. Arrange for the draining down of all wet systems during the months October to March unless written permissions have been given for the PCC to use the house during vacancy, and agreement of the insurers have been secured.
3. Re-commission a house and heating system, not more than two weeks prior to reoccupation under the terms of the insurance, to enable the Sequestrators or other, access to prepare and ready the house for the arrival of a new incumbent.
4. Organise the monitoring of houses during vacancy and tenancy. Responding quickly to any security or repair problems to prevent further damage. Any necessary repair work or improvements will be investigated and remains the responsibility of the Houses Committee.

### **House Tenanted**

It is now policy to attempt to lease all vacant houses, except where the Bishop states otherwise, for an initial period of six months. This brings Durham Diocese into line with what is a growing trend nationally in order to generate additional funds towards the parish share across the diocese. As well as generating income for the diocese, leasing houses also provides security for the property and reduces the duties placed upon the Sequestrators. When a decision to let is directed by the Bishop, the Houses Department will seek consent from the Sequestrators to authorise the Diocesan Property Manager to act on their behalf on all matters relating to the leasing of the property. **This will not involve the Sequestrators in any additional work**, indeed this will reduce their responsibilities towards the house.

### **Procedure to be followed**

1. The Houses Department will require one of the sets of keys, held by the Sequestrators, for viewing and access purposes.
2. When a suitable tenant is identified, an assured shorthold tenancy will be put in place and the Sequestrators notified.
3. The Houses Department or the diocesan agents will organise access for the re-commissioning of the property, its wet systems and heating.
4. The Houses Department will notify the Sequestrators of the commencement date of the tenancy and ask them to notify the relevant service bodies of the change of payee (electricity, gas, water etc).
5. The Houses Department will advise the local authority of the change of occupancy in the light of council tax and other charges etc for which the tenant will be solely responsible.
6. The Houses Department will keep the Sequestrators informed at regular intervals with regard to the tenancy. Where an extension to a tenancy is requested, the Houses Department will consult with the Archdeacon and Sequestrators.

7. Where a tenant notifies the agents of their intention to vacate, the Houses Department will liaise with the Sequestrators and advise accordingly. When the tenant vacates, the Houses Department will ensure that all possessions are removed.

**At this point, the duties and responsibilities for the house return to the Sequestrators until such time as the house is either reoccupied by a new tenant or an incumbent.**

8. The diocesan agents will carry out an end of tenancy inspection and advise the Houses Department of any necessary repairs or cleaning. The Houses Committee will be responsible for this.

## **Preparation of the House for a New Incumbent**

### **Sequestrators' responsibilities:**

Upon notification that a new incumbent is to be appointed the house will be inspected by the Diocesan Surveyor.

The incoming incumbent is responsible for the internal decoration of the house. It is a kindness and welcoming gesture if the Sequestrators can involve the PCC in assisting with this.

### **Houses Committee responsibilities**

A small financial contribution will be provided from the diocese towards ingoing decoration.

The Houses Committee will attend to any objective repairs deemed necessary by the Surveyor.

## APPENDIX D

### FIRE SAFETY

Fire can have a devastating effect on a building and its contents and can spread rapidly owing to the amount of dry combustible material contained in the average house. Life is threatened by both burns and asphyxiation and fire brigades are called out to over 60,000 fires in domestic premises every year. These domestic fires kill nearly 500 people and injure over 11,000 annually.

#### **Do smoke alarms need to be maintained?**

**Yes**, but they generally need very little maintenance.

- The unit should be vacuumed every six months (the nozzle should not be allowed to touch the unit) and the casing and slots should be wiped regularly to ensure that dust is not blocking the sensor.
- When redecorating, the alarm should on no account be painted over.
- Check batteries regularly and renew as required. Ensure you know how to do this, it could save your life!

#### **Fire Fighting Equipment**

- You may wish to provide fire fighting equipment which could comprise of fire extinguishers and fire blankets.

#### **Storing of Flammable Items**

- A Directive from EIG states that “it is not acceptable to store a petrol lawn-mower/trimmer in a meter cupboard which contains both the gas and electricity meters. In fact, petrol must not be kept inside a private dwelling unless it is in a substantial fire proof enclosure. Such items must be kept in a garage or outbuilding detached from the premises or separated by a fire resistant door”. What if the meter
- Do not store old newspapers, polish, paint, petrol, spirit cleaning solvents etc. in the cupboard under the stairs when the electricity and gas meters are located here. A fire under the stairs can prevent escape from upstairs and the stairwell often acts as a chimney causing smoke to rapidly spread vertically, cutting off escape. All such items should be kept in the garage.

## **Electrical Appliances**

- Always keep the oven, hob, toaster and grill clean as build-up of fat, crumbs or grease can easily catch fire.
- Check that the toaster is emptied of crumbs regularly. Make sure it is not near curtains, blinds or kitchen rolls.
- Do not place heaters or candles near curtains or furnishings, and never use them for drying clothes.
- Check for signs of loose wiring and faulty plugs or sockets (such as scorch marks or flickering lights), and have any problems you find fixed.
- Christmas tree lights do not get used often and so need more care. Check that the fuse in the plug is the right size, replace bulbs that blow, don't leave lights on when you go to bed or leave the house.
- Christmas decorations and greeting cards should be kept away from heaters, lights, fireplaces and particularly candles.

## **Candles**

- Always consider carefully when positioning such items for use
- Night lights and T lights should not be put directly on bath surfaces.
- Always place candles on a heat-resistant surface. Night lights and tea lights can melt plastic surfaces, such as the top of a TV and the side of a bath tub.
- Wallpapers can ignite if candles are placed too close for long periods.
- Keep away from curtains
- Do not place on window sills.

## **Cigarettes, cigars and pipes**

- There have been reports of people falling asleep due to tiredness, by taking prescription drugs or drinking alcohol without realising that your cigarette is still burning.

## **Escape Route**

- Choose an escape route. This should be the easiest way out. Think about how to get out and make sure your escape route is kept clear. This should be discussed with all family members in the house and any visitors.

## APPENDIX E

### ADVICE ON REDUCING CONDENSATION

The direct cause of condensation is not always easy to determine. It is often a combination of low air temperature, high humidity, poor ventilation, limited insulation but principally results from the everyday activity of household tasks.

Condensation will occur where warm moist air comes into contact with a cold surface. The air is cooled causing the water vapour to condense into droplets and water film. Condensation if left unchecked can assist mould growth, deterioration of finishes and in extreme cases rot timber.

Here are a few typical examples of moisture production in the home:

2 people at home for 16 hours	3 pints
A bath or shower	2 pints
Drying clothes indoors	9 pints
Cooking and the use of a kettle	6 pints
Washing dishes	2 pints
Bottled gas heater (6 hours use)	4 pints

Some helpful tips to reduce the levels of condensation and the likelihood of excessive dampness and mould growth:

- Good ventilation of kitchens when washing or drying clothes or cooking is essential. Open the windows to these rooms, but keep the doors closed as much as possible. Cover boiling pans and do not leave kettles boiling.
- If washing is put to dry, for example, in a bathroom or kitchen, open a window or turn on the extractor fan. Do not leave the room doors open or moist air will spread to other rooms.
- Do not use unventilated airing cupboards for drying clothes as this will encourage a moisture build up.
- After bathing, keep the bathroom window open, and shut the door for long enough to dry off the bathroom. If possible wipe down the damp wall surfaces with a dry cloth or towel.
- Avoid the drying of clothes on radiators use clothes airers and whenever possible dry clothes outside on the line.
- Do not use portable paraffin or gas heaters.
- When possible provide continuous ventilation to a room by opening the window slightly. Always be mindful of the security risks and retain on a lockable stay. Newer windows should incorporate a trickle vent, which can be left open.
- Try and make sure all rooms are at least partially heated especially in colder weather. Condensation often occurs in unheated bedrooms or storage rooms.
- Clean and/or unblock permanent air bricks or passive vents within rooms.
- Avoid overcrowding rooms or cupboards with storage boxes or clothes tightly packed, if there is no air circulating mould growth is likely.

### PERIODIC CHECKS FOR OCCUPIERS

#### 1. Once a Year

- Clear all rainwater goods to avoid blockages including gutters.
- Look at the trees in your garden – particularly after periods of high winds and in the spring. Keep any bushes, shrubs and trees trimmed in summer months as a security measure.
- Have chimney flues swept.
- If possible check the central heating header tank is full and the ball valve is free to move.
- Make a note if any floor boards become loose or broken, are there any signs of rot or decay, see dampness and fungal decay.
- Check inside the loft space for any signs of dampness to timbers or signs of water ingress. Ensure that there are no signs of any roof leaks by checking the ceilings to the bedrooms.
- Walk around outside the house to check the walls for any cracks. If there are, check inside at the same location and check if the wall feels damp or has any further cracks to the internal finishes. Contact the houses Department if there are concerns.
- Check around the window and door openings to determine if there are any gaps, if so, inspect the inside of the reveals for dampness.
- Walk around the house during or after heavy rainfall to check the rainwater goods. Check that rainwater is not over-spilling or running down the walls.
- Check to see if any internal finishes are excessively damp and is there any staining or deterioration to the surface.
- Garage:- Check for roof leaks with new staining to the garage ceiling. Check the floor for any new large cracks.
- Boundaries:- are fences becoming unstable? Do the boundary walls have excessive leaning or cracks, particularly if trees are close by.

## **2. Twice a Year**

- Check all plugs and cables to appliances are safe and there are no scorch marks.
- Clean out the extractor vents, using a vacuum cleaner or old toothbrush to remove the dust and dirt.
- Kill weeds to the drive and paving areas and remove moss or lichen growth to those paths or yards which remain in the shade.
- If applicable, rake the gravel on the drive ensuring the 'wheel tracks' are not worn down and that there is an even spread of gravel.
- Oil hinges to doors, windows and gate ironmongery.
- Check the airbricks to the external walls and clear away any obstructions, fallen leaves etc.
- Check the water pipes particularly to outside taps or in cellars.

## **3. Frequently**

- Keep rainwater and kitchen gullies free from leaves, litter or any other debris.
- Look at the roof for any defective or missing tiles or slates.
- Switch on the central heating for a few minutes once a week during summer months.
- Checks for leaks to the WC, overflows, flush-pipes etc.
- Clean the waste from the bath, sink and basins regularly to avoid blockage. Chemical drain cleaner solutions are available from most supermarkets.
- Wipe up condensation from window cills on winter days.
- Tighten any screws on hinges, locks, latches and other fittings before damage occurs, particularly to cupboards and kitchen units.
- Remove mould growth to window joinery and walls; most likely to the bathroom, kitchen and utility and storage rooms.
- Keep the property well ventilated with the regular opening of the windows, especially in the winter months. See advice on reducing condensation.

## APPENDIX G

### DANGER – CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

#### Solid Fuel, Wood and Oil Burning Appliances:

- get them checked
- sweep your chimneys
- and be safe

#### The Problem

Heating and cooking appliances fuelled by coal, smokeless fuels, wood and oil can be just as likely as gas appliances to cause carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning if they are poorly installed, faulty or incorrectly used. CO poisoning is mostly caused by inadequate ventilation or lack of correct maintenance of appliances, flues and chimneys. Some incidents are also due to incorrect installation or deterioration of the structure of the chimney. Poisonous CO gas is produced when fuel does not burn properly. You can die from CO poisoning, or your health can be permanently damaged.

CO gas is odourless and tasteless, and you will not know when it is present. It can kill or maim without warning in a matter of hours. You are particularly vulnerable when you are asleep. The elderly and the young are particularly at risk.

The early symptoms of CO poisoning include – tiredness, drowsiness, headache, dizziness, chest pains and nausea.

#### Make sure you are not at risk of CO poisoning

##### DO

- empty ash from a solid fuel appliance regularly, as the fire may not burn properly and this may also damage the appliance;
- have your chimneys swept very regularly (at least once a year), even if you burn smokeless fuel.

##### DO NOT

- use the wrong fuel for your appliance;
- allow non-competent people to install or maintain your appliance or sweep your chimney;
- block or obstruct ventilation grilles or air bricks which provide fixed air paths;
- block or obstruct flue outlets or chimneys;
- cover an appliance or block the hot air outlets;
- use your appliance if you think that it or its chimney is not working correctly. Signs to look out for are fumes or smoke in the house, slower than usual burning, evidence of sooting, difficulty in lighting, and staining around the appliance casing, *particularly if you are suffering from any of the symptoms mentioned above.*

## SOME USEFUL ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Correspondence should be addressed to the **Property Manager/Diocesan Surveyor and Secretary to the Houses Committee**, Diocesan Office, Auckland Castle, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7QJ. Tel: 01388 604515 Fax: 01388 603695 E-mail: [mike.galley@durham.anglican.org](mailto:mike.galley@durham.anglican.org)

**Houses Committee:** Mrs Cheryl Maughan, at Diocesan Office as above:  
E-mail: [cheryl.maughan@durham.anglican.org](mailto:cheryl.maughan@durham.anglican.org)

**Housing:** Mrs Anne Oxley, at Diocesan Office as above:  
E-mail: [anne.oxley@durham.anglican.org](mailto:anne.oxley@durham.anglican.org)

**Chairman of the Houses Committee:** The Revd A Milne, The Vicarage, Church Lane, Murton, Seaham, SR7 9RD. Tel: & Fax: 0191 526 2410  
E-mail: [alanmilne\\_41@hotmail.com](mailto:alanmilne_41@hotmail.com)

**The Archdeacon of Auckland:** The Venerable N J W Barker, Holy Trinity Vicarage, 45 Milbank Road, Darlington, DL3 9NL. Tel: 01325 480444  
E-mail: [Archdeacon.of.Auckland@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Archdeacon.of.Auckland@durham.anglican.org)

**The Archdeacon of Durham:** The Venerable I Jagger, 15 The College, Durham, DH1 3EQ. Tel: 0191 384 7534 Fax: 0191 386 6915  
E-mail: [Archdeacon.of.Durham@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Archdeacon.of.Durham@durham.anglican.org)

**The Archdeacon of Sunderland:** The Venerable J S Bain, St Nicholas' Vicarage, Boldon Colliery, NE35 9JA. Tel: 0191 536 2300 Fax: 0191 519 3369  
E-mail: [Archdeacon.of.Sunderland@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Archdeacon.of.Sunderland@durham.anglican.org)

**Boiler Maintenance** for properties in Sunderland Archdeaconry  
**J & A Moody Boiler Maintenance Ltd** (for emergencies **outside office hours** concerning gas installation, boiler and plumbing), 4A Ritsons Road, Blackhill, Consett, DH8 0AW. Tel: 01207 503291

**Boiler Maintenance** for properties in Durham Archdeaconry (excluding Sedgfield)  
**Michael Hurst** – Plumbing (for emergencies **outside office hours** concerning gas installation, boiler and plumbing), 42 Lincoln Road, Northburn Green, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE32 9XT. Tel: 01670 730786. Mobile: 07973 673644

**Boiler Maintenance** for properties in Auckland Archdeaconry and Sedgfield Deanery  
**Mr David Charlton** (for emergencies **outside office hours** concerning gas installation, boiler and plumbing), 1A Vicarage Close, Howden-le-Wear, Crook, DL15 8RB. Tel: 01388 767354  
Mobile: 07711 743501

## EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS OUT OF OFFICE HOURS

**Gas Leak:** (24 hour service) Freephone 0800 111 999

**Heating Installation:** (No heating and hot water) is only emergency if a secondary source of heat is not provided i.e. gas/electric fire

J & A Moody Boiler Maintenance Ltd (01207) 503291

David Charlton (01388) 767354 or mobile 07711 743501

Michael Hurst (01670) 730786 or mobile 07973 673644

### **Break-in/Vandalism:**

Contact local police station who will be able to arrange a joiner/glazier to carry out emergency boarding up or repair, or any local reputable contractor may be contacted. The following are some contractors which are used regularly by the diocese:

Sunderland Glazing Services, 9 The Cheyne, Thirstley Grange, Sunderland. (0191) 522 9055 or 07767 664515

John M Wadds, Glaziers, PO Box No 612, Railway Street, Newcastle upon Tyne. (0191) 273 7841 Fax: (0191) 226 0749

### **Burst pipes:**

In the event of a burst pipe turn off water at mains. Contact any local reputable plumber or contact the following:

J & A Moody Boiler Maintenance Ltd (01207) 503291

David Charlton (01388) 767354 or mobile 07711 743501

Michael Hurst (01670) 730786 or mobile 07973 673644

**Broken Locks:** Any local reputable contractor/locksmith

**NOTES TO HELP FUTURE OCCUPIERS**  
(Please complete and leave for next occupier)

GAS METER LOCATION .....

NUMBER .....

GAS SUPPLIER .....

ELECTRIC METER LOCATION .....

NUMBER .....

ELECTRIC COMPANY .....

STOP TAP LOCATION .....

WATER METER LOCATION.....

NUMBER .....

WATER COMPANY.....

INTRUDER ALARM MAINTENANCE COMPANY .....

ON VACATING PROPERTY PLEASE INFORM KEYHOLDER OF ALARM CODE

GENERAL .....

**PLEASE INFORM THE HOUSES DEPARTMENT  
IF GAS OR ELECTRIC SUPPLIER IS CHANGED**

## NOTES

## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

QUERY	PAGE	Responsibility		ACTION
		Diocese	Occupier	
Accidental damage	6		✓	If insurance claim made through Diocese, occupier responsible for payment of policy excess
Air Bricks/Damp Proof Course	6		✓	Keep air bricks clear
Alterations	6	✓		Carried out by Houses Department or with written consent from Houses Committee
Artex and Textured Finishes	6			Contact Houses Department before any work to these areas is carried out. See handbook
Bathrooms	6		✓	Occupier responsible for ensuring seals around baths, shower trays, basins are checked regularly
Boilers : Gas or oil	6	✓		Houses Department responsible for installation, maintenance and servicing
Book shelving	7	✓		Houses Department provides up to 30m
Carpets and Floor coverings	7			See handbook
Cat/dog flaps	7			Houses Department strongly advises against installation of these items on grounds of security
Central heating radiators	13	✓		See handbook
Chimney and Flues	7		✓	Houses Department cleans at QI only. Occupier responsible for annual cleaning
Cookers:	7		✓	The Houses Department does not provide cookers
Integral	8	✓		Houses Committee responsible but reserves the right to remove and not replace
Gas fired	8	✓		Tested by Houses Department. Costs for any repairs is the occupier's responsibility
Agas	8	✓		Serviced by Houses Department but reserves the right to remove if major expense likely
Consequential redecoration	8			See handbook
Decorations	8			
External	8	✓		The Houses Department is responsible
Internal	9		✓	The occupier is responsible
Disabled Access	9			See handbook
Doorbells	9	✓		The Houses Department is responsible
Drains	9			See handbook
Driveways and paths	9		✓	The occupier is responsible for keeping these areas in good repair and free from weeds and moss
Electrical Installations and Testing	9	✓		The Houses Department is responsible
External taps	10	✓		Provided by the Houses Department upon written request
Fences	10			See handbook

Fires:	10			
Gas	10			See handbook
Fire surrounds	11			See handbook
Fixtures and Fittings	11			See handbook
Garage doors	11	✓		Occupiers are asked to spray mechanical components with WD40 on annual basis
Gardens	11	✓	✓	The occupier is responsible. PCC at time of vacancy
Gas Installation	12	✓		The Houses Department is responsible for installation, maintenance and testing
Gas Leak	12			See handbook
Glazing	12	✓	✓	Replacement windows are the responsibility of the Houses Department. Breakages due to vandalism are the responsibility of the Houses Department. Breakages due to accidental damage by occupier is the occupier's responsibility
Green Guide	13			See handbook
Gutter Clearance	13		✓	The responsibility of the occupier. The Houses Department will carry out this work at QI only
Heating	13	✓		The Houses Department is responsible for installation, maintenance and servicing
Hedges	14		✓	The responsibility of the occupier
House for Duty	14	✓		Guidelines can be obtained from the Diocesan Secretary at the Diocesan Office
Improvement works	14	✓		The Houses Department will usually carry out improvement works at QI or ingoing
Infestation	14		✓	Occupier to contact local authority. Any costs incurred are the responsibility of the occupier
Ingoing Decoration Grants	14			See handbook
Insulation: loft	14	✓		The Houses Committee is responsible
Insurance: Building Contents	15	✓	✓	The Houses Department is responsible Occupier's responsibility
Instruction to contractors	15	✓		Any works carried out without instruction from the Houses Department will be charged to the occupier
Internal light fittings	15			See handbook
Intruder alarm systems	15			See handbook
Invoices: payment	15			See handbook
Ivy	16		✓	It is the responsibility of the occupier to maintain
Kitchens	16	✓		Upgrading of kitchen is normally carried out when necessary by the Houses Department at QI
Letting policy	16			See handbook
Lodgers	16			See handbook
Listed buildings	16			See handbook

Neglect of House and Garden	17			The Bishop reserves the right to have houses reinstated to an acceptable standard and to recover the costs from the outgoing occupier
Parochial Church Councils	17			Are asked to assist clergy in the care of the house
Pets	17			See handbook
Repairs	17			See handbook
Roofs	18	✓		The Houses Department arranges full inspection at the time of QI. The Houses Department should be informed immediately of any problems
Remote controls	11 15		✓	Replacement batteries for remote controls for wireless intruder alarms systems, electrically operated garage doors are the responsibility of the occupier.
Safety and Security	18			See handbook
Security lighting	19			The Houses Department is responsible for the fitting of security lights. Replacement bulbs are the responsibility of the occupier
Septic Tanks	19			The Houses Department will meet the cost of emptying septic tanks. Arrangements should be made locally
Showers	19	✓		The Houses Department is responsible for the provision of showers. Occupiers should check seals around baths and shower trays on a regular basis to avoid leaks
Signs/nameplates	19		✓	To be organised locally. Grant of up to £15 available from Houses Department
Smoke alarms	19			All houses are fitted with battery operated smoke alarms. Replacement batteries are the responsibility of the occupier. Hardwired smoke alarms are fitted at the time of QI by the Houses Department. Replacement of the back up battery is the responsibility of the occupier
Stop taps	19		✓	Occupiers should be familiar with the location of the stop tap
Storage of caravans	19			The Houses Department does not carry out modification works to any site for the provision of storage of caravans
Telephones	20			See handbook
Thermostatic radiator valves	20	✓		These are fitted by the Houses Department at QI or at time of replacing boiler
Tiling	20			See handbook
Trees	20	✓		A full inspection of trees will be carried out by the Houses Department at QI. Works to trees should not be undertaken by occupiers without written consent from the Houses Department
TV Aerials, Cable TV, Satellite receivers	21			See handbook
Unauthorised works	21		✓	Any costs for the repair of unauthorised works will be the responsibility of the occupier
Utility bills	21		✓	All utility bills are the responsibility of the occupiers. PCC during vacancy
Washing line poles	22	✓		Provided by the Houses Department. Rotary airers will not be provided
Water Meters	22		✓	See handbook
Water Rates	22			See handbook
Whitegoods	22		✓	These are the responsibility of the occupier