



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of St Edmundsbury  
and Ipswich

# A Guide to Parish Vacancies and Appointments



Revised January 2016

David Jenkins  
Archdeacon of Sudbury

Ian Morgan  
Archdeacon of Suffolk

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This booklet is designed to help all those who find themselves involved in the overseeing of a parish vacancy and the subsequent appointment of a new Parish Priest. Those who will find it particularly useful include outgoing priests, Rural Deans, Deanery Lay Chairs, Church Wardens, and Parochial Church Council (PCC) members.

This document draws upon a number of sources and resources. In particular the present Archdeacons would want to acknowledge the work of their predecessors in compiling the original text. Section E3 of the Diocesan Handbook entitled **DIOCESAN VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES** will in due course reflect the changes incorporated into this updated (and renamed) version of A Guide to Parish Vacancy and Appointment.

Other sources of information have also been used, including the 2008 Vacancy Booklet of the Diocese of Chester. We are very grateful to that diocese for permission to use extracts from their text.

## **Appointing A New Parish Priest: A Brief Overview**

As you go round the churches of the diocese you often see memorials to parish priests who served in one place some forty years or more. They settled for life and became synonymous with the village. It was hard to imagine one without the other.

Today, stipendiary clergy usually stay for a much shorter period. The average is probably somewhere around five to six years. During that time the particular gifts of that particular person are used to build up the richness of Christian experience and practice to the benefit of parishioners. The talents, interests, techniques and strengths of each one's ministry contribute to the wealth of Christian life and knowledge in the whole community. Each priest builds on the work of another. There will be many who have cause to be thankful for the ministry that is now ending, but who can also look forward to another new dimension of caring, teaching, and witness.

As we prepare to say our farewells to an outgoing priest, our minds naturally begin to turn to the future and to the appointment of a new priest who, in time, will be coming to work with us and among us.

Basically there are three partners to an appointment: the Patron(s), the Parishes and the Bishop.

As the first partner, it is the Patron's responsibility to nominate a candidate. The Patron (who might be the Diocesan Bishop and/or the Diocesan Board of Patronage) may find that candidate through personal knowledge, the recommendation of others, or by using the advertisement procedures within the Church of England or through the Church Press. If Presentation to the Benefice is Suspended, then responsibility for finding a Priest-in-Charge lies with the Bishop in co-operation with the Parish, but the Patron(s) will be kept closely informed.

The second partner is the parochial one. At an early stage the Archdeacon and/or the Rural Dean or Deanery Lay Chair will meet with the PCC or its representatives to ask questions and to listen, they will keep in regular contact with the parish throughout the appointment process. This way the views and aspirations of the parish are kept at the heart of the search for a new parish priest.

When a candidate nominated by the Patron, or in a suspended benefice, by the Bishop, or a number of candidates responding to an advert, have expressed an interest, an interview panel is convened chaired by the Archdeacon. The panel includes elected lay representatives from the parish(es) involved; the exact way this is done depends on whether the vacancy is for a single or multi-parish benefice and whether or not a formal Team Structure is in place. The archdeacon can give the details specific to each vacancy.

It is important to note that whilst more often than not the interview panel is able to reach a clear decision, the parish representatives do in fact have the right to say "no" in a single parish benefice and their views will always be taken very seriously by the Bishop in all other types of appointment.

The third partner is the Diocesan Bishop as he is the one who has to give final approval by agreeing to license a Priest to care for the parishes in his diocese. The Bishop is kept informed of developments at every stage.

Thus, much time, effort and prayer goes into making sure that we discern God's will in order to get the right person for you, your parish, and wider community.

## **Continuing the Mission and Work of the Church**

Clearly, however, the ministry of the church does not 'go on hold' during a vacancy. Nor does it rely solely on the SSMs (self-supporting ministers), Licensed Lay Ministers and Elders in the parish or benefice supplemented by the steady stream of visiting Clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers to help care for services. The ministry continues through each member of the church encouraging and supporting each other, each fulfilling his or her own ministry within the Body of Christ. We would strongly encourage you to view a period of vacancy as an opportunity to discover further the many resources already existing within your parishes and benefices.

We wish you every blessing as we continue and grow in that work together. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance.

**David Jenkins**  
**Archdeacon of Sudbury**

**Sudbury Lodge**  
**Stanningfield Road**  
**Great Whelnetham Bury**  
**St Edmunds IP30 0TL**

[archdeacon.david@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:archdeacon.david@cofesuffolk.org)

01284 386942

**Ian Morgan**  
**Archdeacon of Suffolk**

**Glebe House**  
**The Street**  
**Ashfield-cum-Thorpe**  
**Stowmarket IP14 6LX**

[archdeacon.ian@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:archdeacon.ian@cofesuffolk.org)

01728 685497

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# PREPARATIONS FOR THE VACANCY

## The Outgoing Parish Priest

So much of what a priest does in a parish, while appreciated in general, is almost unknown in detail to most of the PCC and sometimes even to the Wardens. When a priest feels the call to move on, or when retirement looms, it is very helpful if he or she can find time to set down in detail all those things which are useful to the smooth running of the parish. In larger parishes or benefices where there may be an established parish office with a secretary or administrator, continuity may be fairly simple. However, there may still be many questions about what goes on behind the scenes. Here are some suggestions:

- Please leave an updated visiting list for your parish or benefice. Give details of the Nursing Homes you visit and the home communions you are responsible for.
- If you have not already done so, try to ensure that within your PCC there is a Fabric Officer, a Sacristan and a Server. If you are fortunate enough to have a Self Supporting Minister (SSM), Reader, or Lay Elder, ensure they are equipped and ready to cope with pastoral matters. It is important that the Wardens are not left with everything to do.
- If you have acted as your own sacristan, it would be helpful to set out details of what wafers are required, including any gluten free varieties, the types of candles used, (including the Easter or Paschal candle) and information about the sacramental wine used. Details about how much one should order, how often, and from where are vital pieces of information. Please pass on any catalogues etc. if available.
- Seasonal Services: If you were in the habit of inviting doctors and nurses on Health Sunday, teachers on Education Sunday, arranging for a donkey on Palm Sunday, and a speaker on Mission Sunday as well as organising flowers for Mothering Sunday and a Christingle Service, leave details. But most importantly, because you will not be there to remind anyone, leave a brief note on all the special services in the year.
- Make sure that your Wardens are fully conversant with all the paper work connected with baptisms, weddings and funerals. A list of telephone numbers and E mail addresses of funeral directors, grave diggers, organists etc. will be much appreciated.
- Please leave the Wardens and your PCC Treasurer details of Parochial Fees etc.
- Make sure that there is an up-to-date Diocesan Directory available or ensure that the Wardens know how to access a copy on-line.
- If there is a parish computer ensure that arrangements are in place for E mails to be checked and transfer any appropriate data that may be held on computer. If this has been sited in the Parsonage House it will need to be relocated in case the house is let and for insurance purposes.
- Hand over printed service-sheets stored at home

## The Church Wardens

During the vacancy the Wardens have legal responsibility for the parish alongside the Rural Dean. See page 12 for the section on **Sequestrators** (those responsible for a parish during a vacancy).

Your first and most important duty at this time is the morale of the congregation. Be positive and cheerful. Lend a willing ear and be eager and ready to help and to delegate areas of responsibility.

You will also need someone to turn to as a sounding board, particularly if unfamiliar circumstances arise. Therefore it is very important that you:

- Introduce yourself to your Rural Dean and Archdeacon. They are there to help and are always willing and able to do so, no matter how busy they are.
- Work closely with your co-Warden, SSMS, Licensed Lay Ministers and Elders in the Parish or Benefice as well as the Parish or Benefice Administrator.

Try to keep things going just as before and to encourage everyone to take a pride in keeping up standards. This makes the whole experience one of personal and collective growth in maturity as a congregation.

Try to ensure that in your community, people do not think that everything has stopped now that the "Reverend" has gone. Make sure that the Parish Council and the Funeral Directors know whom to contact.

Make sure that you are conversant with, or have access to, the regulations regarding:

- a) Your legal responsibilities.
- b) The Diocesan Handbook.
- c) PCC regulations contained in the Church Representation Rules.

## **The Parochial Church Council**

A vacancy is also an opportunity for the PCC to take greater responsibility and for the wider congregation as a whole to work together in a common cause.

During the vacancy, the Vice Chair will preside at meetings in place of the Incumbent. It is usual, but not essential, for one of the Wardens to take this role.

The Chair needs to be particularly sensitive during a vacancy as well as being firm. A light, friendly discipline is more useful at this time than sheer efficiency. Try to make meetings meaningful, inclusive, fairly short, and if possible, fun!

This is a time for every member of the PCC to be active. Members should be aware of everything that goes on and realise that the Wardens need all the support they can get. Helpful, positive, friendly and practical criticism is always useful. Encouragement and praise are always welcome. Practical help is even better.

Remember that you represent the congregation. A successful vacancy depends on the confidence that the congregation feels in those steering the ship. Let people know what is going on.

Encourage the congregation to read the internal notice board.

Keep up any ecumenical links you may have.

Be aware of the challenges in finding priests to fill vacancies. The diocesan staff will work hard on your behalf. Reassure those in the congregation who grumble that the vacancy is dragging on. It is important to remember that finding a new parish priest is a crucially important task and it cannot be rushed.

Always start and finish your meetings with prayer, and let the prayer be appropriate and thoughtful; not just a formality.

# **THE PARSONAGE HOUSE**

## **Letting**

It is diocesan policy to let parsonage houses during vacancies. The Archdeacon will be consulted to establish the potential length of the vacancy and normally the property will be advertised for let under an Assured Shorthold Tenancy with a fixed term of 6 months. Before it is let the Diocesan Surveyor will inspect the property and arrange for it to be put in a suitable condition. All negotiations and administration regarding the letting of the property will be conducted by the Diocesan Surveyors. If access to the property for interview candidates is required, then please contact the Diocesan Office to arrange this rather than speaking directly to the tenants.

## **Utilities**

Whilst the property is empty, payment of water, gas and electricity bills become the responsibility of the Diocesan Property Committee, so any such bills or notices from local authorities that are addressed to the house should be forwarded immediately to the Diocesan Office. Before the departure of the Incumbent, the Diocesan Office will have made arrangements with him or her to transfer responsibility for these. The Property Committee will not meet the cost of any telephone arrangements during the vacancy. If the PCC wishes to put interim arrangements in place, please contact the Diocesan Office before doing so.

## **Keys**

Having clarified with the Diocesan Office in advance the arrangements, the Incumbent should hand all keys for the property to a parishioner, preferably a Churchwarden. An arrangement will then need to be made for the keys to be handed over to the Diocesan Property staff. It is preferable that a key to the property is retained locally so that access for post and periodic checks (weekly, unless the house is rented) on the property can be made.

## **Insurance**

The Diocesan Property Committee insures the parsonage house, but whilst it is empty there is a slightly reduced level of cover. During the winter months the heating system will be drained for this reason. Please note that property left in the parsonage house belonging to the PCC will not be insured and the PCC are therefore asked to ensure that any equipment stored in the property is removed at the time it is vacated.

## **Vacancy Inspection**

When a priest is appointed and an occupation date has been agreed, arrangements will be made to inspect the property in order to assess any necessary maintenance. If the property has been tenanted, this will normally take place as soon as is practical after the tenant has vacated. A schedule of the agreed works will be recorded in writing and, sent to the incoming priest. The Diocesan Office staff will arrange for all the necessary works to be completed and where appropriate the Diocesan Surveyor will be involved. Once any necessary maintenance has been carried out and prior to occupation by the incoming priest, it is the duty of the Sequestrators to exercise a general supervision of the parsonage house, its garden and land and any outbuildings. Expenses incurred through upkeep of the garden may be chargeable to the Property Committee (only if prior approval has been sought for the work).

For any queries relating to the parsonage house, please contact the Diocesan Office on 01473 298500 where someone will be happy to help.

## **WORSHIP & VISITING CLERGY**

The pattern of services should continue as before, and any services already taken by the laity will continue uninterrupted.

Licensed Lay Ministers and SSMS travelling to a benefice during a vacancy from elsewhere in the deanery or beyond, can claim travel expenses at the standard diocesan rate from Sequestration. The maximum mileage claim allowed will be for a return trip of 100 miles. SSMS and LLMs resident in the benefice should continue to claim expenses in the same way as they did before the vacancy, i.e. parish or benefice account.

The fee of £20 for conducting a service is only payable to retired stipendiary clergy (up to a maximum of £40 in a single day).

Retired stipendiary clergy may claim a fee from the DBF for weddings and funerals (see Diocesan Handbook F8). No expenses are payable for occasional offices, clergy should show it as an expense on HMRC tax returns. SSM is voluntary ministry and no fee is received at present. General Synod is looking at this situation, particularly in respect of SSMS who lose pay in order to officiate at a funeral or a wedding.

The Rural Dean has a list of local retired priests who are licensed to minister in the Diocese and will arrange a rota for you. Some Rural Deans may be willing to let the Warden make arrangements direct.

We are fortunate in this Diocese in having a large number of retired clergy willing and able to serve parishes during a vacancy. Part of the enjoyment of a vacancy is the variety of personalities and sermons that these wonderful people bring when they visit you. Make it a matter of pride to ensure that they enjoy coming to your church as much as you enjoy having them.

There are now so many different kinds of service and liturgy, that coming 'cold' to an unknown church can be quite daunting, even to an experienced priest. Each parish has its own choice of service book and hymn book(s). While the priest must obviously be comfortable with the nature of the service and have the ultimate say in what goes on, you will find that most of them appreciate a detailed 'order of service' being provided at least a week in advance.

If you have an Elder, Reader or experienced church musician, they might be willing and able to be responsible for choosing the hymns. Please ensure that a detailed order of service, including the readings and the hymns, is sent in plenty of time to the visiting priest, bearing in mind that the priest will usually base the sermon on the readings and/or hymns. Always invite the priest to make changes to suit him or herself. Include in your order of service, the names of those who will read the lessons and let the priest know whether or not the elements are to be brought up by members of the congregation. If your parish has its own locally produced service booklet send a copy to each priest before his or her first visit to you.

Finally, please be sensitive to the needs of visiting clergy and readers. For an early morning service it might be appropriate to offer breakfast. If a significant journey is involved, a cup of tea or coffee and access to a toilet on arrival is always welcome. The offer of transport might also be appreciated/needed. Members of the congregation, if asked, will usually willingly help with these sorts of domestic matters.

# VACANCIES & THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

## Introduction

The process of appointing a new priest to fill a vacancy is a complicated one, governed by church legislation. The main purpose of this legislation is to find, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a person who feels called to the parish and who is acceptable to the parish, to the Bishop (who shares the cure of souls), and to the Patron (if that is a body or individual other than the Bishop).

There are a number of points to bear in mind as you begin the search for a new priest:

- o The process depends on whether the new priest is to be appointed as an incumbent or as a priest-in-charge (the Patron's right of presentation having been suspended), and on a number of other details.
- o Responsibility for liaison with the parish throughout the vacancy process rests with the Archdeacon, who maintains close contact with the Bishops and other senior colleagues.
- o All of the formal paperwork is routed through the Diocesan Office and/or the relevant Archdeacon.
- o Above all, it is important to remember that the parish will be given a full opportunity to take part in the process of finding a new priest. But, as a matter of policy, the process does not normally start until after the former incumbent has left. This policy is intended to give the parish space and time to reflect on previous ministry, and to discuss its hopes and aspirations for future ministry.
- o In recent years, the average length of vacancy in the diocese has been about nine months – some vacancies are filled more quickly, but others take rather longer.

## The Legal Aspects

The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 sets out the procedures for filling benefices which become vacant. For most purposes the provisions do not apply where the Patron is the Crown, the Duchies of Lancaster or Cornwall, or the Lord Chancellor, although those representing them will in practice work closely with the diocese and the benefice. In addition they do not apply when filling an office of team vicar (as opposed to team rector) in a team ministry, (although there are similar provisions within the Pastoral Measure 1983 as amended).

Nor do the provisions apply in those cases where the right of presentation is suspended or about to be, and a priest in charge is to be appointed by the Bishop. If such suspension takes place then the benefice remains technically vacant, and its pastoral care is normally undertaken by a priest in charge licensed by the Bishop for that purpose.

It is therefore important for a PCC to realise that whilst the Patronage Measure procedures will normally apply, that will not automatically be the case and should not be presumed. Early contact with the Archdeacon may help to clarify a particular position.

## **Suspension of Presentation**

In situations where pastoral re-organisation is envisaged or where a parochial cure is combined with another post, the Patron's right of presentation may be suspended by the Bishop. In other words, the Patron is unable to exercise a right to nominate a new parish priest but the Bishop is able to appoint a priest-in-charge. This process is governed by the Pastoral Measure 1983 and its associated Code of Practice. In such cases, the Bishop has to obtain the consent of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee and to consult with the Patron(s), the PCC(s) of the parish(es) concerned and with the Rural Dean and Lay Chair of the deanery synod before exercising this power. In this diocese the consultation is normally carried out by the Archdeacon on behalf of the Bishop. In practice in this diocese, the Archdeaconry Mission & Pastoral Sub Committee makes a recommendation, which is normally endorsed by the Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee and followed by the Bishop.

If suspension takes place (and it may not be for more than five years in the first instance), then before a priest in charge is appointed by the Bishop there will be further consultation with the Patron and parish representatives elected by the PCC.

NB: Although the Patronage Measure procedures do not formally apply in this instance in reality a very similar process is followed in the search for a priest in charge and much of the same technical terminology will be used for convenience.

## **Appointments**

Except in those cases where presentation to a benefice is suspended, the procedures will be governed by the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986, which has been in force since late 1989. Most parishes in the diocese will therefore have had some experience of its operation. The following gives a brief summary of the powers and duties of the PCC on the filling of a vacant benefice. Further information can be obtained from the Archdeacon.

Matters begin with the Bishop giving notice of the vacancy or impending vacancy to the Designated Officer, who then gives notice and detailed procedural information to all Patrons of the benefice, informing which of them is entitled to act on this occasion. Additionally, the PCC secretary is notified by the Designated Officer of the PCC's rights and the various steps which it needs to take.

## **The PCC (Section 11) Meeting**

Within four weeks of the notice of vacancy the PCC must hold one or more meetings (from which the outgoing incumbent and spouse and the Patron [and his, her or its representative] are excluded) for the purpose of:-

- preparing a statement describing the conditions, needs and traditions of the parish/benefice (see Appendix A: A1 for single parish benefices or A2 for multi-parish benefices or teams ). This must be sent as soon as practicable to the Archdeacon who passes copies of it to the Patron and the Bishop.
- appointing (usually) two lay members of the PCC to act as representatives of the PCC in connection with the selection of an incumbent;
- deciding whether to request the Patron to consider advertising the vacancy. The final decision on advertising rests with the Patron; if a decision is made to advertise, the Patron or parish (benefice) will bear the cost.
- deciding whether to pass a resolution under S3(1) or (2) of the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993.

- deciding whether to request a written statement from the Bishop describing, in relation to the benefice, the needs of the diocese and the wider interest of the Church.

## **Multi-parish benefices**

As a result of pastoral re-organisation most benefices in the diocese now comprise two or more parishes. In a multi-parish benefice which does not have a team council or a joint PCC, the meeting or meetings of the PCCs required by section 11 of the Measure are to be joint meetings of all the PCCs of the benefice. The PCCs may make a joint statement or one parish may wish to make a separate statement dealing with itself, but the other decisions of the meeting must be joint decisions.

With regard to the appointment of lay representatives, in a multi-parish benefice the joint meeting of PCCs (not the individual PCCs) must appoint "such number of persons, but not less than four, as will enable each of those councils to have at least one representative, but not more than two representatives." The object is to give fair representation to all parishes whilst keeping the number of representatives to manageable proportions for the job they have to do.

It would also be very helpful if someone from the benefice could be appointed as a point of contact between the Archdeacon and/or Patron and the parish representatives and Church Wardens.

## **Joint (Section 12) Meeting**

Under the Patronage Measure a Section 12 Meeting does not normally take place unless one of the "interested parties" (Patron, PCC, or Bishop) request it. In this diocese it has been decided that a Section 12 Meeting will normally be arranged in every case for an exchange of views between the interested parties about the PCC(s) statement and the statement made by the Bishop, if one has been requested. Such a meeting is also the norm prior to the appointment of a priest in charge where the Patron's right of presentation is suspended. This is also an opportunity to explain and agree the process of appointment. In practice these meetings have proved to be extremely valuable, and give an opportunity to clarify a number of details including diocesan policy with regard to the care and letting of parsonage houses during a vacancy, and also to explain any deanery proposals for pastoral re-organisation which may affect the benefice at the present or in the future.

The Bishop and/or the Patron may send a representative to the meeting if unable to attend personally. At least one third of the members of the PCC(s) must attend and the Rural Dean (unless s/he is the outgoing Incumbent) and Lay Chair must also be invited.

A model agenda for a Section 12 meeting can be found at Appendix B. The Archdeacon will ensure that an agenda is available for the meeting.

## **Selection of Incumbent**

Candidate(s) for interview may be chosen either by the Patron or by the Parish Representatives and Archdeacon, or by a combination of all three. Candidates for a post will usually be interviewed by the Parish/Benefice Representatives and the Archdeacon. The panel may also include the Patron and the Rural Dean and/or Lay Chair. Access to a tenanted Parsonage House will need to be requested through the Housing Team at the Diocesan Office. The Bishop or Patron will then be notified of their recommendation. In the case of parishes where the rights of Patrons have not been suspended, this is done by the exchange of forms as set out in the Patronage Measure.

Expenses incurred at the initial interview are met by the parish. The recommended mileage rate is 30p per mile. If candidates are coming from very distant locations, and expenses are likely to be very high, then please seek the advice of the Archdeacon.

Any subsequent expense incurred in meeting with the bishop prior to confirmation of appointment is paid directly from Bishop's House to where claims should be sent.

## **Lapse**

If no priest has accepted appointment to the benefice within nine months of the date when the benefice becomes vacant, the Patron's right to select the new incumbent (assuming this has not been suspended) lapses to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He must consult the Bishop and the PCC representatives as well as anyone else he thinks fit, but he does not normally need their approval before offering the benefice to a priest.

## **Institution or Licensing**

The Bishop must give at least three weeks' written notice to the PCC Secretary of his intention to institute the priest as incumbent. The PCC Secretary must see that it is displayed at, or near, the principal door of every church and licensed place of worship in the parish for two weeks. The institution or collation as it is called, where the Bishop is the Patron, can then take place. Arrangements for the service will be made by the Church Wardens in discussion with the Archdeacon. The Archdeacon or Rural Dean will normally conduct a rehearsal a few days before the service. A priest in charge will be licensed rather than instituted but the service is similar.

## **Sequestrators**

Church Wardens and the Rural Dean are automatically appointed as Sequestrators for the benefice. (Section 1(1) of the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1992).

Duties of the Sequestrators include receiving the profits from the benefice (i.e.: fees normally payable to the incumbent) and paying them over to the Board of Finance. Appendix 3 sets out the range of issues that need to be attended during the vacancy.

The main duty of the Church Wardens, as Sequestrators, is to ensure that pastoral care within the benefice does not suffer during the vacancy. They should therefore set up an early meeting with the Rural Dean and any SSMs, Readers and Elders in the Parish to arrange services.

Payment of fees and/or expenses to clergy or readers for duties undertaken during the period of sequestration will be made by the Board of Finance on receipt of claim details for services taken and travel duly authorised by the Archdeacon. Queries about the administration of claims should be directed to the Archdeacon. Stipendiary clergy may claim expenses directly from the parish or benefice but they do not receive any additional fee.

If the vacancy continues beyond the annual appointment of Church Wardens, then the retiring Wardens should ensure that their successors are fully aware of the sequestration arrangements. Likewise, any retiring Rural Dean should inform his or her successor of any vacant benefice for which there are sequestration responsibilities.

The sequestration period and responsibilities of the Sequestrators will come to an end when a new incumbent is instituted or (for all practical purposes) when a priest in charge is appointed.

## **WELCOMING THE NEW INCUMBENT**

Most parishes are overjoyed to have a new resident in the parsonage and will readily think of making sure that the house is clean, the lights working, and that there are some useful groceries in the kitchen. A working party in the garden before arrival would also be appreciated!

Some practical suggestions follow. In a multi-parish benefice many of the tasks listed below may need to be repeated for each parish. If someone was able to collate all this information for the new priest, that would be most helpful.

- A pastoral list of the congregation with telephone numbers, and possibly a photo album too!
- A list of the PCC and officers with contact details.
- A list of the contact details of any SSMS, LLMS, Lay Elders and Lay Workers licensed to the Parish.
- The name and contact details of the Chair of the Parish Council.
- Information about the local schools. If there is a C of E Aided or Controlled School in the Parish, then the Incumbent will be an ex-officio Governor.
- The name and contact details of the Head Teacher.
- Directions to the nearest Post Office and shop if there is not one in your village.
- Details of milk and paper delivery.
- The name and address of your Local Authority.
- The day of the week that the dustbins are collected.

Don't forget that the new incumbent knows nobody. Introduce yourself and others by name but don't expect him or her to remember these the first time you do so.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

So now you have a new incumbent. General excitement, renewed interest and expectation are marked by hearing a new topic of conversation in the street instead of the usual "Nice day".

For those who have borne the main burden during the vacancy, two feelings may compete:

- Relief that there is someone else to take responsibility
- A feeling of no longer being at the centre or in control.

The more successful you have been in the vacancy, the stronger will be the second of these feelings.

Your role now is to be ready with information about the parish and the people, but not to try to influence policy or practice.

Change of one kind or another is inevitable and necessary and Wardens should support what the Incumbent wants to do, though it can be helpful to warn him or her of any expected opposition from a known quarter!

Sensitivity is needed on all sides, but having enjoyed your vacancy, set about enjoying even more your time with your new Minister.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A (1) – Single Parish Benefice Profile Questionnaire

The answers to the following questions provide the basis for the parish profile. This profile will be read by all those clergy interested in applying for the post and will be uploaded on the Diocesan website:- [stedmundsbury.anglican.org>latest>vacancies](http://stedmundsbury.anglican.org/latest/vacancies)

You may wish to look at those currently on the site for ideas about presentation (including photographs) or to ask for an example from the archdeacon

Questions to consider for your Parish Profile				
<b>THE COMMUNITY/COMMUNITIES</b>				
Population	(total number, predominant age groups if applicable)			
Housing	(type, e.g. privately owned, tied housing, council, with approximate percentages)			
Employment				
Schools and what involvement there is with each one				
Other Community Institutions				
Details of current policies e.g. baptisms, communion before confirmation, marriage of divorcees				
Any other factors including any expectations attendance of annual events specific to this parish				
<b>THE CHURCH</b>				
Church buildings	(age, size, situation, including halls)			
Church tradition	(e.g., Evangelical, Anglo-Catholic, Central)			
<b>SERVICES</b>	Time	BCP		CW
Average attendance				
Which Hymn Book do you normally use?				
Occasional offices	How many in the last 12 months?			
Baptisms				
Weddings				
Funerals				
Church Organisations				
Others licensed to minister in Parish and the kind of roles they undertake	Self-supporting Ministers "SSMs," (NSMs, OLMs, Readers, Lay Elders, Lay Workers)			
Retired Clergy in Parish				
Relationships with other Churches/Faiths				
<b>PARSONAGE HOUSE</b>	(location, age and size of house, amount of garden, any other features)			
Are the Priest's expenses paid in full?				
Did the Parish pay its Parish Share in full last year?				
PCC's assessment of Parish strengths				
PCC's assessment of areas for development				
What the PCC is looking for in the new priest.				
What the PCC and others can offer the new priest.				

## Appendix A (2) – Multi Parish Benefice or Team Profile Questionnaire

The answers to the following questions provide the basis for the parish profile. This profile will be read by all those clergy interested in applying for the post and will be uploaded on the Diocesan website:- [www.cofesuffolk.org/latest/vacancies](http://www.cofesuffolk.org/latest/vacancies)

You may wish to look at those currently on the site for ideas about presentation (including photographs) or to ask for an example from the archdeacon

Although each parish may well wish to make particular points, it is advisable to put as much as possible into an opening joint section so that any applicants are helped to gain an overview.

### Aspects to consider and questions to answer for your Benefice Profile

<b>THE COMMUNITIES</b>				
Population	(total number, predominant age groups if applicable)			
Housing	(type, e.g. privately owned, tied housing, council, with approximate percentages)			
Employment				
Schools and what involvement there is with each				
Other Community Institutions				
Details of current policies e.g. baptisms, communion before confirmation, marriage of divorcees				
Any other factors including any expectations attendance of annual events specific to this benefice				
<b>THE CHURCH</b>				
Church buildings in each parish	(age, size, situation, including halls)			
Church tradition of each parish	(e.g., Evangelical, Anglo-Catholic, Central)			
<b>SERVICES (across the benefice)</b>	Time	BCP		CW
Average attendance				
Which Hymn Books do you normally use?				
Occasional offices (details of each parish to form a 'Benefice Table')	How many in the last 12 months?			
Baptisms				
Weddings				
Funerals				
Church Organisations in each parish				
Others licensed to minister in each Parish or across the Benefice and the kind of roles they undertake	Self-supporting Ministers "SSMs," NSMs, OLMs, Licensed Lay Ministers, Lay Elders			

Retired Clergy in the Benefice	
Relationships with other Churches/Faiths	
<b>PARSONAGE HOUSE</b>	(location, age and size of house, amount of garden, any other features)
<b>OTHER QUESTIONS</b>	
In what ways do the parishes of the benefice work together (please include decision-making structures)	
Are the Priest's expenses paid in full?	
How are they paid (e.g. benefice account or split between the parishes)	
Did the Benefice and each parish pay its Parish Share in full last year?	
PCCs' assessment of Benefice strengths and any that are particular to one or more parishes	
PCCs' assessment of areas for development and any that are particular to one or more parishes	
What the PCCs are looking for in the new priest.	
What the PCCs and others can offer the new priest.	
Then add any other material specific for each parish	

## Appendix B – Sample Agenda for a Section 12 Meeting

<b>Ambridge with Penny Hasset</b>	
<b>1. Welcome and introductions</b>	<b>Bishop</b>
<b>2. Prayers</b>	<b>Rural Dean or Lay Chair</b>
<b>3. Introduction by the Chair</b> - the Bishop explains the purpose of the meeting, its significance and the way the agenda will be handled.	<b>Bishop</b>
<b>4. Pastoral reorganisation</b> - the Archdeacon explains any implications for the benefice of pastoral reorganisation plans within the deanery or more widely and explains the meaning of suspension (if applicable).	<b>Archdeacon</b>
<b>5. Clergy housing</b> - the responsibilities of the parish and diocese in respect of the house; the letting policy and the specific proposals.	<b>Archdeacon</b>
<b>6. The needs of the Parish</b> - the Parish / Benefice Profile document is considered and points elaborated as necessary.	<b>Archdeacon</b>
<b>7. The characteristics of the Parish Priest</b> - the Bishop leads this discussion.	<b>Bishop</b>
<b>8. The next steps</b> - the Archdeacon explains briefly the working of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 (if applicable) and the responsibilities of the Parish Representatives; some explanation of the process of choosing the next priest is given.	<b>Archdeacon</b>
<b>9. Comments by any Patrons who may be present</b>	<b>Patrons</b>
<b>10. Any questions from the floor</b>	<b>Bishop</b>
<b>11. Final prayer and blessing</b>	<b>Bishop</b>

## Appendix C – Checklist for a Vacancy

<b>Vacancy Checklist</b>	
1.	Who is responsible for arranging cover for Sunday services and which members of the clergy and readers will mainly be drawn on if they are available? (Visitors to be asked to stick to the established rite/office for the service in question, e.g.: the communion service in use should remain in use during the vacancy.)
2.	If the usual pattern of services has to be altered in any way (e.g. during special seasons such as Easter), who beside each member of the standing committee (Wardens, PCC Secretary, Treasurer and any Parish or Benefice SSM'S together with Lay Elders and Readers) should first be consulted?
3.	Emergency calls: to whom should they be referred?
4.	Baptism enquiries: to whom should they be made?
5.	Who will do baptism visits?
6.	Wedding enquiries: to whom should they be made?
7.	Who will be responsible for arranging weddings, their legalities, the entering of banns in the banns book and ensuring banns are called and 'signed for' in the book?
8.	Who will give banns certificates to couples when weddings are elsewhere?
9.	Who is responsible for dealing with funeral enquiries and organising funerals? NB: Local funeral directors need to be told this (by whom?)
10.	Any request for monuments/inscriptions should be forwarded to the Rural Dean. Who will keep him or her informed of any proposed changes to churchyard or church building and fabric?
11.	Any sick/home communions need arranging and agreement reached about who will officiate?
12.	Who will deal with the reimbursement to visiting clergy of expenses for fees and travel? Who will deal with the reimbursement of travel expenses Self-supporting Ministers and Readers for travel expenses?
13.	When will the Parsonage House be empty?

<b>Vacancy Checklist</b>	
14.	Who will be the contact for the Housing Team at the Diocesan Office?
15.	Has the PCC a copy of, or access to, the Diocesan Handbook and the Diocesan Directory? NB: Directory needed for many useful addresses and telephone numbers.
16.	Who is to check with the outgoing priest the location of files, terriers, Quinquennial inspection reports, etc.? Where will these be kept? Church safe if possible, but it is important not to leave papers and files in the Parsonage House.
17.	Who will deal with Church correspondence, and to consult whom?
18.	Who will ensure notices are prepared for each Sunday, to ensure that they are announced? And who will keep notice boards up to date?
19.	Who will ensure that Church and buildings etc. remain insured, with current insurance certificate(s) on view?
20.	Vice Chair of PCC to consult standing committee members on number and location of PCC meetings
21.	Do the PCC Secretary, Electoral Roll Officer and Wardens have information about calling meetings (including Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting) and about Church representation generally? If in doubt, consult the Rural Dean.
22.	Is each PCC member aware of parish policies, e.g. on baptism, or re-marriage of divorced people? Important that the PCC is clear about whether they are going to hold the same policies during the vacancy.
23.	Any other matters to be decided or noted?