

Guidance Notes for Funeral Directors 2017

In 2012 General Synod and Parliament passed legislation to change the current parochial fees arrangements, which will come into effect on 1 January 2013. This note outlines the main changes as well as providing resources for your reference and contact details for further help, should you have any more questions. The Archbishops' Council has issued an explanatory leaflet "parochial fees" to help explain the changes. Also "A guide to Church of England Parochial Fees" was released in October 2012, and can be found together with the latest fee tables on the Diocesan Website.

Change in the Law on Funeral Fees from January 2013

From the beginning of 2013, the system [an incumbent's fee plus a Parochial Church Council (PCC) fee] changed to a system where there will be a diocesan fee plus a PCC fee. The diocesan fee is the legal property of the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance (LDBF).

Fees for all funerals include elements for supporting the local church and the diocese generally. That means that when retired clergy take a funeral, they are no longer entitled to keep any part of the fee that is chargeable to the family. All payments for funerals taken by retired clergy must therefore be made either to the relevant parish (PCC) or the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance (LDBF), as explained below. The PCC or LDBF are then responsible for passing the correct payment on to the retired cleric according to a diocesan scale. The scale is set so that retired clergy receive no less than they did previously.

Another change in the law is that the 'extras' that churches are allowed to charge will be restricted to heating and genuine optional extras (e.g. music, bells, vergers) and reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for the priest. Extra charges for church administration etc. are unlawful.

Recommended approach to paying the fees

Here are the recommended ways of paying the fees. Please do not make any payments in cash and ensure that all cheques are made payable to a PCC or to the LDBF, rather than to any individual.

Funeral including a service in church

Please make out a single cheque to the PCC of the local church. The amount should be for the diocesan fee, PCC fee, and any extra charges combined. The diocesan and PCC fees combined will be as follows:

- **Church funeral followed by cremation, or burial in council cemetery** **£208**
- **Church funeral followed by burial in churchyard** **£473**

Individual churches' extra charges for heating, music, clergy travel etc. will be additional to these amounts and each church will tell you what those figures are.

Funeral at crematorium only

- **The combined diocesan and parish fees will be £182.**

If the minister taking the funeral is on the staff of a local church (vicar, curate, Reader etc) or the arrangements for the funeral have been coordinated through a local church, please make out a single cheque for £182 plus clergy out-of-pocket expenses to the PCC of that church. The local church will send the relevant part of the fees on to the diocesan office.

*If the minister is not on the staff of a local church (e.g. a retired priest) and it is not clear which PCC should be paid, you should give a cheque made payable to **Lichfield DBF** to the minister together with a completed payment form which can be downloaded from the Diocesan website.*

The minister will then be responsible for passing the cheque on to LDBF who will ensure that the correct parts of the fees are distributed to the appropriate parties. Please do not make out any cheques payable to a retired minister personally. If you would like to discuss the option to make direct payments by BACS, please contact Jess Dace 01543 306052 or Kate Reynolds 01543 306095.

Burial of cremated remains in a churchyard

- **The combined diocesan and parish fees will be £151.**

If you are involved in collecting the fees, please process them in the same way as the funeral fees.

Are there any circumstances in which fees are not charged?

Fees must normally be charged for all Church of England funerals, even if the priest or lay minister taking the service is a volunteer. But vicars have the authority to waive (local or Statutory PCC) fees if there are special individual circumstances, which they will discuss with you. (Please note that retired clergy, Readers etc. do not have the authority to waive fees, and if you have any queries on this point you should contact the archdeacon.) In order for the DBF to waive their fee, then the clergy person or the parish must contact the Finance Department direct at finance@lichfield.anglican.org or on 01543 306095.

What should we do if we are aware of a person claiming to carry out Church of England services who is not complying with the new system?

Everyone involved in organising and conducting a Church of England funeral must comply with legal requirements. A CofE funeral is a funeral taken by an authorized CofE minister (lay or ordained). So, a service conducted by any other person cannot be described as a CofE funeral, even if the words from a CofE form of service are used. In addition, the new legislation makes it clear that the statutory fee belongs to the LDBF.

It is therefore unlawful for anyone to act in such a way that the Board of Finance does not receive the part of the fee to which it is entitled. That is one reason why we ask that you do not make cheques payable to individual clergy. If you have any concerns or queries, please contact the relevant Archdeacon;

The Archdeacon of Lichfield archdeacon.lichfield@lichfield.anglican.org tel: 01543 306145

The Archdeacon of the Stoke archdeacon.stoke@lichfield.anglican.org tel: 01782 663066

The Archdeacon of Salop archdeacon.salop@lichfield.anglican.org tel: 01902 372622

The Archdeacon of Walsall archdeacon.walsall@lichfield.anglican.org tel: 01922 709092

Equally the Archdeacon should be informed of any person claiming to take services in the name of the Church of England who you have any reason to believe does not have the appropriate licence and authorization.

Jonathan R L Hill
Finance Director
Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance