

Housing Guide September 2025

The A-Z of taking care of your clergy home



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Preface

Some of you will be experiencing life in clergy housing for the first time and others will have lived in clergy houses for a number of years whether within the Diocese of Bath and Wells or other dioceses. Living in a clergy house is quite different from being in rented accommodation, because it is part of the overall provision along with a stipend and pension. We appreciate that you live in a house that you might not have chosen to live in yourself. What is to be remembered is that the house is your home as well as a base for your ministry. The DBF has provided it for you and you are the steward of your home for the duration of your time with the Diocese of Bath and Wells. Please treat the house with respect as it comes to you to aid you in your ministry and will be passed on to your successor. We hope you will enjoy living in



the house and being part of the community around you. At some point soon we look to being able to visit you in it.

This comes with our thanks and our prayers for you, your family and your friends as we share in ministry together.

Bishop Ruth

Definitions:

the use of the word Board and DBF refer to the Bath and Wells Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocesan Parsonages Board.

The use of the word occupant includes all incumbents, clergy, curates and house for duty occupants.

The use of the word household includes the occupier, their spouse, children and parents and spouses' parents.

Introduction



his guide has been prepared to assist occupants of Board houses with the management of their home. The guide is an evolving document and is subject to review and changes when needed. For the most up to date version please refer to [the property and housing section of the diocesan website](#).

The guide lays out responsibilities towards the house by the occupant and the Board. The stewardship of your home is a partnership between you and the Board. It is important that the house is seen as a resource for the mission of the church which can be handed on in good condition for future generations.

There is a responsibility to our parishioners to ensure we use our resources prudently and effectively. The Board expects that the property will be respected and cared for. The property is your home and ministry base, you are the custodian of the house for as long as you live there. Be mindful of the next occupant of the house and keep it in good condition, respecting it whilst enjoying it as your home. You will appreciate that funds are limited and derived mainly from Parish Share, thus there is a responsibility to our parishioners to ensure that funds are used prudently and all occupants are treated equally. The Board is also mindful of the earth's resources and wishes to ensure

longevity for the house and its fittings in line with its environmental objectives.

This guide applies to occupants of all properties held by the Board. Under the Repair of Benefice Measure 1972 the occupant has a duty to take proper care of the property, being a duty “equivalent to that of a tenant”. The Measure also gives certain responsibilities to the DBF and occupant as detailed in this guide and in Appendix 1. There is also a responsibility on the Board to seek compensation from the occupant if it considers repairs are “necessary by reason of damage caused or aggravated by any deliberate act of the occupant”. The DBF may ask occupants to pay for the making good of any repairs needed as deemed appropriate and may take proceedings for their enforcement.

This guide has been ratified by the Houses Committee and contains information and advice so that you and your family can enjoy your home.

Please keep it in a handy place.

Dr Axel Palmer
Chair, Houses Committee

The property team

This team of diocesan staff are based in Flourish House and in place to support the clergy with occupation and routine management of residential property and glebe. Queries regarding all types of repairs, planning applications, sales, purchases, housing policy and related matters should be referred to this team, which consists of:

James Millard	Head of Property and Glebe
Owain Wynne	Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager
Annabel Cook	Property Co-ordinator
Alice Gifford	Property Assistant
Kelly Harrison	Property Administrator (part-time, non-customer facing role)

Email:

property.helpdesk@bathwells.anglican.org

Call: 01749 670777

Monday to Thursday: 9am - 5:15pm Friday:
9am to 5pm

Repairs and maintenance

Please report any repair or maintenance items to the Property Department via our online reporting system, Fixflo.

bathwellsdiocesepropertymanagement.fixflo.com

The Board expects occupants to do very basic jobs such as replacing missing screws. Care should be taken not to undertake any work which would put people at risk, nor embark

on repairs which are beyond the capabilities of those concerned. All works that involve expenditure by the Board need to be approved and commissioned by the Property Department in advance or payment will not be made.

It is a legal requirement that work to the electrical installation should only be carried out by a “competent contractor”. Work to the gas installation must only be carried out by Board approved Gas Safe Registered contractors.

Ensure you keep to appointments made – avoiding abortive call-out costs for which the Board reserves the right to charge.

Contractors will contact you directly for appointments, please endeavour to keep to these appointments.

Emergency repairs

If you have an emergency within office hours please ring the Property Helpdesk on 01749 670777. If the issue is out of hours please ring a locally available contractor who works out of hours, you need to report this to the property.helpdesk@bathwells.anglican.org immediately so we are aware and can place an order when we are next in the office. If you contact a contractor, it is only to deal with the emergency to make safe and not the consequential works as the cost of this may not be covered by the Board. If you have not reported the emergency immediately and we receive an invoice for work we were unaware

of, payment might not be made or may be delayed. Only out of hours emergency works should be arranged directly with contractors as all other works need to be commissioned by the Property Department.

Accidental damage

Any accidental damage caused to the property or garden/fences/boundaries by the occupant, is to be immediately notified to the Property Department and any damage will be made good at the occupant's own expense. If the Board is able to make a successful claim against its buildings insurance the occupant will be responsible for paying any excesses.

Adaptations

The Board will consider funding adaptations to the house for the occupant, spouse and children as required by an occupational therapist, where no other funding streams are available to the occupier. The Board will not adapt properties for occasional visitors nor anyone staying at the property other than the occupant, spouse and children.

The property is a private dwelling and as such does not come under the Equalities Act. It is not therefore appropriate or possible for the Board to make adaptations to properties for visitors. It is recommended that for the purposes of meeting the requirements of the Equalities Act that clergy make "alternative provisions" such as meeting individuals at a different location.

Alarms

Fire/smoke alarms

The Board is responsible for the installation and any replacement of alarms. The occupant is advised to test the alarms weekly and ensure that all the alarms in the property are working. The occupant should keep a log of testing and advise the property team of any fault. The occupier is responsible for battery changes.

Intruder alarms

The installation and maintenance of intruder alarms is the responsibility of the occupant. If installed by the occupant,

Intruder Alarms can be left in-situ when the house is vacated but no guarantee is given to the incoming occupant of the functioning of the intruder alarm. Grants may be available, please contact the Property Department for details.

Carbon monoxide alarms

The Board is responsible for the installation and any replacement of alarms. The occupant is advised to test the alarms weekly and ensure that all the alarms in the property are working. The occupant should keep a log of testing and advise the property team of any fault. The occupier is responsible for battery changes.

Alterations

The occupant is not permitted to make any additions or alterations without the prior written consent of the Property team, such consent may be given on the basis that all works are reinstated upon vacation. Alterations include structural and non structural works, plumbing or electrical works. Occupants are permitted to erect shelves, mounted TVs and pictures but you will be required to remove the items and make good the holes and re-decorate when you vacate.

If you install a stair gates for children or animals, during your occupancy please remove and make good any damage before vacating the property.

Asbestos

The Board will have undertaken or will be about to undertake an Asbestos Management Survey. You will be provided a copy of this survey. It will need to be kept at the property and you will need to show it to any contractors that attend the property to undertake work. If you propose to undertake minor repairs or put holes in walls to erect shelves/pictures, please consult the Asbestos Survey to check for the presence of asbestos. If you wish to query the survey or interpretation of it, please contact the Property team. If you find any material that you suspect to be asbestos that are not noted in the survey, please contact the Property team.

Asbestos was used in many parts of buildings, below is a sample of uses and locations where asbestos can be found:

Asbestos product	What it was used for
Sprayed asbestos (limpet)	Fire protection in ducts and to structural steel work, fire breaks in ceiling voids etc
Lagging	Thermal insulation of pipes and boilers
Asbestos insulating boards (AIB)	Fire protection, thermal insulation, wall partitions, ducts, soffits, ceiling and wall panels.
Asbestos cement products	Flat or corrugated sheets Roofing and wall cladding, gutters, rainwater pipes, water tanks
Certain textured coatings	Decorative plasters, paints
Bitumen or vinyl materials, roofing felt	Floor and ceiling tiles

Some Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) are more vulnerable to damage and more likely to give off fibres than others. In general, materials that contain a high percentage of

asbestos are more easily damaged. The table above is roughly in order of ease of fibre release (with the highest potential fibre release first). Sprayed coatings, lagging and insulating board are more likely to contain blue or brown asbestos. Asbestos insulation and lagging can contain up to 85% asbestos and are most likely to give off fibres. Work with Asbestos Insulation Board (AIB) can result in equally high fibre release if power tools are used. On the other hand, asbestos cement contains only 10–15% asbestos. The asbestos is tightly bound into the cement and the material will only give off fibres if it is badly damaged or broken, or is worked on (e.g., drilled, cut etc).

Bathrooms

The Board does not repair or replace lavatory seats, these are the responsibility of the occupier. Shower curtains are also the responsibility of the occupant. Lavatory brushes, toothbrush holders will not be provided, however a lavatory roll holder and mirror will be provided. Shaver sockets are not provided but some properties may already contain them, no new sockets will be installed.

Bins/waste

The occupant is responsible for Bins/ Waste management and should ensure that rubbish and unwanted possessions are removed from all parts of the house and garden.

Rubbish, soil and other material piled against the wall of the house may allow damp to bridge above the damp proof course, and this must be avoided.

The occupant is responsible for sorting all bins and recycling and putting it out for collected on the designated days. If a bin is damaged, missing or need replacing the occupant should contact the local authority to arrange for a replacement.

If the occupants require a green bin for garden waste, they will need to make the necessary arrangements with the local authority at their own expense.

Boilers

The Board is responsible for servicing the boiler. This servicing is undertaken annually, and we would appreciate your co-operation regarding access to undertake this work in a timely manner. Whilst servicing the boiler the contractor will also service any gas fires you may have in the house. The servicing of any white goods including gas cookers is the responsibility of the occupant.

Running out of oil can cause damage to the boiler, as occupant you are responsible for checking the oil level. If you do run out of oil you will need to organise and pay for your own contractor to rectify any damage caused. Do not solely rely on gauges or monitors, please do check the levels via a visual inspection and arrange regular top-ups. The Board will not be liable for any damage caused due to faulty readings on gauges or monitors.

Boundaries

The Board are responsible for all boundaries where there is a legal liability, this includes walls and fences. The Board will not meet the cost of fencing which needs erection due to

the occupant having children or animals, fencing is erected in order to delineate a boundary only.

Businesses

The consent in writing of the Property Department is required if a member of your household intends to operate a business from the house. There may be insurance, planning or tax implications to consider. Please contact the Property Department in order to seek consent.

Car charging points

The Board does not install electric car charging points, however if the occupant wishes to install one, they need to obtain the consent in writing of the Property Department and provide the necessary minor works certificates, as well as agree to remove the charging points if requested to upon vacation and then to provide the necessary minor works certificates.

Carpets/flooring

The Board is responsible for floor coverings to bathrooms, shower rooms, WC, kitchens and the utility. All other floor coverings are the responsibility of the occupant. The diocese will not undertake any flooring in basement areas regardless of their use. If you decide to replace the carpet or change the flooring during your occupancy, you must first secure from the property team. On leaving the property you should not leave the property in a worse condition than when you took occupation.

Before vacating the property, the property should be left clean, and the carpet cleaned with a carpet cleaner. The Board reserves the right to request evidence/ receipt of the of the carpet clean. Please note that the board will allow for fair wear and tear.

Chimneys

The regular sweeping of chimneys used for open fires or any solid fuel stove is essential. Where chimneys are used, sweeping is the responsibility of the occupier and should be undertaken annually. The Board may ask for a copy of the paid invoice for their records. If you wish to install a stove/wood burner the prior written consent of the Property Department will be required and a Hetas certificate will be required for their records. In line with the Church's carbon neutral ambitions, we do not support the reinstatement of open fires.

Please refer to the following guidance:

<https://www.hetas.co.uk/consumer/certificate-of-compliance/>

https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/1901291307_Ready_to_Burn_Web.pdf

Condensation, damp and mould

Condensation occurs when warm, moisture-laden air contacts a cold surface, turning into water droplets. This is more common in winter when indoor air is warmer than outside. Daily activities generate significant moisture: two people can produce 3 pints, cooking and boiling a kettle can add 6 pints, a shower or bath can contribute 1 pint, and drying clothes indoors can create 9 pints of water.

You can tackle condensation by preventing moisture buildup: wipe down surfaces, dry clothes outside, close kitchen and bathroom doors when in use, use extractor fans, and vent tumble dryers outside.

Ventilating your home can also help. When cooking or washing, simply open windows to aid ventilation. If you need to dry clothes in your house do so in a small room with a window open.

Keep air circulating in your home by not overfilling cupboards and under bed space, leave a gap between furniture and walls.

Keep your home warm by maintaining a low heat when the weather is cold or wet. When the whole house is warmer, condensation is less likely to form.

Please use every attempt to follow our Guide to damp, condensation and mould
<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/content/pages/documents/guide-to-damp-condensation-and-mould-v1.docx>

Contractors

Only contractors appointed by the Property Department are authorised to work on your home. The only exception is out of hours when you may have cause to contact to undertake emergency work.

Cookers and other white goods (appliances)

The Board does not provide cookers or white goods unless already in situ in the property. There may be integrated appliances at the property however these become your responsibility upon occupation of the

property with regard to any necessary repairs. The Board is not liable should they need repair or maintenance. The Board gives no guarantees as to the condition or state of these goods upon your occupation of the house. The Board is responsible for replacing integrated appliances that are beyond economic repair.

You are liable for the installation of your white goods and you must use a suitably qualified electrician or gas engineer. Work to the gas installation must only be carried out by Board approved Gas Safe Registered contractors.

Alterations to fitted kitchens to adapt them for appliances are not permitted unless written permission from the Property Department has been obtained.

Council Tax

The Board pays your Council Tax directly to the local authority. You need to let the Property Department know the number of adults living in your household and if there are any changes of circumstances during your occupation. Council Tax is paid based on two adults (over 18 years old) living in the property. Discounts are available for certain disregarded adult occupiers i.e. full time students, student nurses, school or college leavers, those still in receipt of child benefits, apprentices, hospital patients, patients in nursing and care homes, those who are severely mentally impaired, carers and care workers and those in receipt of certain pension credits.

The Board is able to claim a Council Tax rebate for Single Occupancy. Where occupants live alone and their circumstances

change this must be communicated to the Property Department. To incorrectly claim a Single Occupancy rebate is a breach of the law by the occupier NOT the Board, thus it is important you communicate with the Property Department to ensure your house has the correct number of people registered for Council Tax, this is your responsibility NOT the Board's. The Property Department also needs to be informed if there is a single occupier where previously more than one adult has lived in the house as a discount can be applied for thus saving parish share funds.

The Board will not pay Council tax for anyone outside of the immediate household, any additional cost will need to be borne by the occupant and will be re-charged to them by the Board.

Please ensure you provide the Property Department with full details of the adults in the household to ensure the correct Council Tax is paid, this is a legal requirement for you as the occupant. If you are in any doubt as to what the Council Tax status is for the property, please contact the Property Department.

Curtains, blinds, tracks and poles

The fitting of curtains, blinds, tracks and poles are the responsibility of the occupant. On vacation these items may be left for the next occupant with the written permission of the Property Department. If the property already has curtains, blinds and poles you are welcome to replace these at your own cost.

Damage

The Board has adopted a pro-active approach to any damage cause by the occupant and reserve the right to recover the cost of damage caused during the occupancy of the property. The provisions of section 13(4) of the Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 will apply with regard to the occupier paying for

repairs resulting from a lack of reasonable care of the property.

Death in service

Following the death of a serving clergy person the members of the household should be reassured that they will be able to remain in the house for a period of 3 months following the death of the clergy person.

Decorations - external

The Board are responsible for external decorations to the property.

Decorations – internal

The occupant is responsible for internal decorations. It is requested that neutral pale colours are used, and no motifs or stickers applied to walls or doors. It is required that the house is returned to us with neutral colours on the walls and no motifs or stickers applied, you will be responsible for re-decorating in neutral colours. If the Board has cause to re-decorate upon your vacation due to the guidance not being followed, payment will be sought from the occupant. No writing on the walls is permitted or graffiti - again it is expected the walls are decorated in neutral colours prior to vacation. The use of textured paint is not permitted in Board houses.

Decoration grant

Re-decoration grants can be claimed for up to £100 a year. This has to be agreed in advance and no more than £100 per will be awarded.

Disability

Please see the section under Adaptions.

Doorbells and door knockers

A standard doorbell/knocker is provided by the Board.

Drains

In order to keep the drains and sewage system working well, please avoid pouring fatty substances including cooking oil down the sink and drains. Do not put paint down the drains. Wet wipes or other non-biodegradable items should not be flushed down the lavatory. For blockages resulting from improper use, the Board reserves the right to re-charge the cost of rectification to you. Blockages to internal drains (sinks, shower, toilets) due to misuse are not the responsibility of the Board. In the first instance you should endeavour to unblock it yourself or call a plumber. For any blockage due to a fabric defect, repairs are the responsibility of the Board.

Electrical works

The Board is responsible for undertaking a condition survey on electrical installations in a property – things like wiring, plug sockets and fuse boxes at the Property. No works to the electrical installations are permitted by the occupant unless prior written consent has been obtained by the Property Department.

Extractor fans

Where provided the Board is responsible for the repair of extractor fans, the occupant is responsible for keeping them clean and removing dust and grime from the cover and replacing filters. Please ensure they are switched on when cooking or showering/bathing as this will help to reduce condensation.

Fire and Escape Planning

If a fire starts inside your home, you need to:

- Get out
- Stay out
- Call 999 as soon as it is safe to do so

Don't try to fight the fire – you could put

yourself and others in danger. The sooner you call the fire brigade, the sooner help will be on the way.

Escape Planning

A Escape Plan is a plan that could save your life in an emergency. In a smoky, scary atmosphere, it's easy to freeze, panic and become disorientated. By planning and practising how you will escape with the whole family, you can be more confident about a safe escape. [More information.](#)

Fostering

The Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) is fully supportive of clergy wishing to foster children and will accommodate this endeavour where possible.

If you wish to investigate fostering, please contact your relevant local agency, local authority or charities that will support you through this process. They will undertake all relevant due diligence, safeguarding and assessments. More info can be found on your [local council website](#) or through [Fostering Somerset.](#)

Before you can foster you will need to contact the DBF's property department to advise that you are looking to foster. The property department will ask to see all due diligence, safeguarding and assessments. We will share this information with the Diocesan safeguarding team and put you in direct contact with them.

Once this has been reviewed and if approved and the property is deemed suitable to foster, the DBF will give you authority to foster within a diocesan property.

Please note that the DBF is not part of the wider application process and that due to current budgetary constraints, funds to support or make alterations needed to foster any child are not currently available.

Gardens

Gardens are the responsibility of the occupant, for keeping gardens clean, tidy, and well-maintained. This includes: regularly mowing lawns, trimming hedges and bushes, maintaining non-retaining structures and weeding flower beds. Additionally, please ensure that all drives and paths are kept clear of moss and leaves, as these can create hazardous conditions. Ivy and other climbing plants must not be allowed to grow up the walls of the property, as they can cause significant damage.

Garden sheds, greenhouses and other garden structures

Occupants are permitted to erect sheds, greenhouses and other garden structures at their own expense provided you remove them upon vacation unless consent in writing is given upon vacation by the Property Department.

If the property already has a shed, greenhouse or other structure at the property when you moved in these become the occupant's responsibility and not the responsibility of the Board with regard to any repair or maintenance.

On occasions the Board may provide a wooden shed/structure, any assets belonging to the Board are stated in the Quinquennial survey and are not to be removed from the property. The Board is responsible for these assets and will repair and maintain them however if the Board deems they are beyond repair they will not be replaced.

General data protection regulations (GDPR)

It is essential we can pass on your contact details and name to contractors. If you do not wish us to pass on your email address, phone number or name you need to notify us otherwise we will deem it acceptable to pass your details to third parties undertaking works the property so they can contact you for appointments direct.

Gutters, downpipes and water butts

All gutters and downpipes should be cleared at least once a year during the autumn once leaves have fallen from the trees. The cost of clearing out the gutters will be reimbursed by the Property Department up to the sum of £100 per annum upon it being sent a copy of the invoice paid.

If you install a water butt please ensure the overflow is connected back into the downpipe to prevent damp. The Board is not liable for water butts, these remain your responsibility. They will be removed upon vacancy unless prior written consent is given by the Property Department and all connections to any downpipes should be made good/repaired to their satisfaction.

Heating

The occupier is responsible for paying the gas/electric bill directly to the service provider and for ordering and paying for the oil tank to be filled. The occupant is responsible for understanding how the heating system works, call outs will not be arranged for simply educational purposes. Some properties will have Honeywell Evohome systems installed. These will no longer be repaired or replaced by the Board if they are faulty. No further Evohome systems will be installed in Board Properties.

Instruction booklets

All instruction booklets/manuals should be kept in a safe place and close to hand should any engineer/contractor be on site and want to undertake any servicing or repair of the appliances at the property.

Insurance

Buildings

The Board insures the property. Please do not negate the insurance policy otherwise you may be liable for making good if the insurance policy is invalidated.

The buildings insurance covers the cost of repairing damage to the structure of the property. Garages, sheds (if the property of the Diocese) and fences are also covered, as well as the cost of replacing items such as pipes, cables and drains if the damage / loss is due to an insured peril.

Buildings insurance usually covers loss or damage caused by:

- fire, explosion, storms, floods, earthquakes
- theft, attempted theft and vandalism
- frozen and burst pipes
- fallen trees, lampposts, aerials or satellite dishes
- subsidence • vehicle or aircraft collisions.

When reporting a maintenance issue to the property team, they will consider if the issues is a possible insurance claim or a maintenance defect.

Contents

Contents cover is the responsibility of the occupier. It is important that occupiers make their own arrangements for the insurance of their personal possessions.

Japanese Knotweed

Some properties have Japanese Knotweed and these are being treated by the Property

Department. If you suspect you have Japanese Knotweed, or a neighbour has, please contact the Property Department immediately so that we can arrange treatment. Please do not negate any treatment works and if there is Knotweed you are obliged to permit access for treatment and you need to follow the advice.

Keys

The replacement of locks and keys as a result of loss or theft rests with the occupier and is often covered by the contents insurance policy. The responsibility does not lie with the Board. All keys including garage keys should be left at the property upon vacation.

Light fittings

The Board is responsible for providing appropriate light fittings, any shades and replacement bulbs are the responsibility of the occupier. The Board does not provide additional lighting i.e. in cupboards, alcoves or under counter. If these were in-situ prior to your arrival we will ensure they are checked when the electrics are tested but if they fail they will not be replaced. The Diocese will maintain external security lighting above 2.5m Where lighting is safely

accessible from the ground, the incumbent will be responsible for changing bulbs.

Limescale

Limescale is prevalent in certain areas of the Diocese. The Board does not supply water softeners; if one exists at your property you will be responsible for it. Occupants who wish to install a water softener need to obtain the prior written consent of the Property

Department. Please ensure you descale your shower heads, taps and WC on a regular basis to prevent the build-up of limescale.

Lodgers/tenants

The Diocesan Guidelines for Clergy include a section (5.2) regarding lodgers and tenants. The Houses Committee has revised this section which applies to all occupants of houses. It became effective from 1 September 2021. The review has incorporated guidance and legal requirements from the government website for anyone who takes in a lodger. Please refer to the [Government website](#) for full details.

Clergy must ask for authority from the property department to enable them to have Lodgers/tenants

A copy of the revised diocesan guidelines is contained in Appendix 2. Please note that, apart from clergy with Freehold ownership, permission is required before taking a lodger. However, in all cases the guidance within the Appendix must be followed.

If you have an existing lodger who was in occupation prior to this guide being issued (July 2020) please contact the Property Department so that we can log this, the guidance in Appendix 2 will still apply. You are permitted to allow members of your household to reside in the property with you.

Loft Access and Storage Policy

The Board does not install, maintain, or

loft ladders. Any broken, damaged, or defective loft ladders will be removed when identified.

Please note that loft spaces are not designed to provide storage. The joists are ceiling joists, not floor joists, and therefore cannot safely support significant weight.

In addition, lofts contain insulation material that plays a vital role in reducing heat loss, lowering energy costs, and maintaining comfort in individual homes. Storing items directly on top of insulation compresses it, which significantly reduces its thermal efficiency. It may also create safety hazards if items shift or fall through weakened areas.

For these reasons, the Board strongly discourages any use of loft areas for storage.

If you choose to access or use the loft space, you do so entirely at your own risk. The Board accepts no responsibility for any damage, injury, or loss arising from such access. Furthermore, if any damage occurs as a result of accessing or using the loft, you will be liable for the full cost of any necessary repairs.

This policy will not be applied retrospectively to current occupants. However, where the Board needs to undertake works in a loft space, residents will be asked to remove all stored items and will ask whether these items need to be stored or needed.

Multiple occupation

If a house is classified by the local authority as being a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) because of arrangements made by the occupant, they will be responsible for any fee charged by the authority. HMOs are identified by the separate use of facilities (e.g., separate bathrooms, kitchens, mealtimes) and by the number of unrelated persons in occupation. Classification of a

house as a HMO can prove very expensive for the Board and clergy are asked to consult the Property Team before making any arrangements which might lead to this. Fire safety matters are a priority and there are very specific requirements for HMOs.

Parish use

It is acknowledged that the property will on occasions be used for parish meetings etc. Any permanent use of the property as an office is not permitted unless consent in writing is obtained by the Property

Department in advance. A licence agreement is required between yourself and the PCC, please contact the Property Department for a pro-forma. Any such parish use is to cease upon your vacation, and you will be required to ensure the parish relocate at the end of your occupation. You are reminded that the function of the property is to be your home and base for ministry; it is not provided to be a parish office. If there is a parish use of your home already you will need to contact the Property Department in order to regularise the occupation.

The Property Department keeps a log of all parish use and it is essential to report any parish use as there may be insurance and health and safety requirements to consider or as well as costs relating to their occupation.

Pest control

The Board is not responsible for pest/vermin control. In exceptional circumstances the Board will undertake preventative work to ensure further infestations are prevented. Should you have any queries please contact Property.helpdesk@bathwells.anglican.org.

Pets

Domestic pets are permitted in Board houses, any additional fencing requirements are the occupant's responsibility and are to be removed upon vacation. Any damage caused by pets is to be made good at the occupant's own cost and the Board reserves the right to recover costs for damages caused by pets if not remedied.

Written permission is required from the Property Department for the fitting of a cat/dog flap and, and, upon vacation, the opening is to be fully reinstated to the original condition.

Ponds

The creation of a pond in the garden is not permitted by the Board.

Quinquennial inspections

A survey will be made every 5 years. The inspection reviews the condition of the house and grounds. Access should be afforded in order to facilitate this inspection. The inspection covers the condition of the external fabric of the house and the internal fittings; it does not include internal decorations, although comment may be made on the state of them. A copy of the Quinquennial will be sent to you. The works are subject to funding being available.

Resettlement Grants

Resettlement Grants are paid by the Board and can be used for a variety of uses. Please contact the Finance Department for details if you have any queries

Satellite dishes and TV aerials

The Board is not liable for any satellite dishes or TV aerials. You will need written consent from the Property Department to erect one as there may be covenants or planning issues

to consider. You may be required to remove any satellite dishes or TV aerials and make good and damage.

Septic tanks and other private sewerage systems

The Board is responsible for all repairs and maintenance and the costs of emptying septic tanks. You will need to notify the Property Helpdesk in advance of when they require emptying, so the Department can arrange appropriate contractors.

Shelving

The Board will provide shelving for up to 20 linear metres in the study. If you wish to put up your own shelves in addition to this in the property you will be required to remove them upon vacation and make good the walls. (please note this not available to Curate)

Solar panels

If the property has a solar panel installation. Please familiarise yourself with location of the RCD breaker that relates to the panels; this can sometimes be located on the consumer board or separately close by. In the event of a power cut it is advisable to check that the breaker is still in the correct position. During normal use generation data is sent automatically via SIM card, however, you may be contacted by an independent meter reader who will require access to provide a verified reading.

We have a number of houses with solar panels, these systems are owned and maintained by the Board, in most cases the Board receives a feed in tariff for any energy supplied to the grid. The occupant benefits by using this energy for free before it is exported to the grid.

The simplest way to understand it is that when it is sunny and you put on a light or washing machine they will be powered by the

solar panels. Any power not used by yourself will go into the grid and the diocese receives a feed in tariff.

Statutory notices

If you receive any statutory notices you need to forward them to the Property Department immediately. This will include any notification of planning application or highway notifications.

Telephone

The installation of a telephone or broadband line from your network provider is your responsibility along with the subsequent costs.

Third party rights

The occupant is not permitted to make arrangements for use of, or access over any part of the property without prior written consent of the Property Department. This is intended to avoid unintentionally binding a successor into an arrangement which may not be suitable for them. This included third party lettings.

If the occupant notices any change in boundary by an adjoining neighbour, please report the matter to the Property Department.

Trees

The Board is responsible for large trees at the property, however you do need to report to the Property Department any concerns you have about the trees so we can instruct tree surgeons. Occupants are not permitted to plant any trees within 12 metres of the property and no Leylandii are permitted to be planted in Board gardens. Some trees could be subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) which means they cannot be pruned or cut down without permission. There may also be restrictions in place due to the area being a conservation area.

If you wish to check the status of a tree, please contact the Property Department.

The Board will meet the cost of the pruning or taking down any large tree which:

- a) threatens the structure of buildings or overhands the public highway;
- b) has become (or likely to become) dangerous;
- c) has grown too large for the site.

Trees will not be removed by the Board for cosmetic reasons. If you wish to remove a tree yourself, please seek prior written permission of the Property Department.

The occupants are responsible for fruit trees, hedging/ leylandii/ bushes / shrubs and ornamentals etc. They should be maintained and regularly cut back to prevent them from becoming too large. The Board will not be responsible for fruit trees, hedging / leylandii, bushes / shrubs and ornamentals etc that have become unmanageable due to occupant neglect. However, if the Board deems that there is a Health & Safety issue with the above the Board will review undertaking the required works and reserve the right to recover the cost from the occupant.

Warranties

If there are any warranties that are applicable to the property, the Property Department will make you aware of these. Once you are aware of these any breaches in the warranty will be held as your responsibility and any remediations/work needed that need to be paid for as a result of a your breach of warranty will be your financial responsibility and the Board will seek full reimbursement from you.

Washing lines

Washing lines are not provided by the Property Department and are the responsibility of the occupier.

Water

The Board pays water rates/meters directly to the provider. The incumbent is requested to be mindful of the environment and budgets and not to use excessive amounts of water. The use of water will be monitored by the Property Department and excessive use will be highlighted. Respectfully we ask you not to not fill paddling pools, self-build swimming pools or hot tubs unless you reimburse the Board the additional cost of water.

Using less water is good for the environment and we should all strive to preserve the Earth's resources. The average daily use for water is:

1 person – 181 litres
2 people – 301 litres
3 people – 373 litres
4 people – 452 litres
5 people – 499 litres
6 people – 548 litres

If your average use is above average, we will contact you to see how we can help you reduce your water consumption. There are some simple actions you could take to reduce your water consumption: do not leave the tap on whilst brushing teeth or shaving, take showers instead of baths, have shorter duration showers etc. There are various free water saving devices available from the water supplier in your area (see respective websites). As a diocese we are mindful of the world's resources and as such have banned the use of sprinklers at board-owned properties.

Contractors

The occupants are responsible for maintaining a safe environment for themselves, contractors and third parties at the premises. When a contractor is on site undertaking works instructed by the Board they should be treated with respect and courtesy.

The area they are working in should be clean and free of clutter. In the event a visit is cancelled because of safety issues, the diocese reserves the right to recover costs for the cancelled visit and place further work on hold until the area is made safe by the occupant.

Emergency contacts

Gas

In the event of a suspected gas leak do not operate any electrical equipment or switch on devices or light switches in case of sparks. Make sure there are no sources of flames anywhere. Open all windows and doors if you can safely do so. Turn the gas lever near the meter to off if possible and contact the National Gas Emergency Service

Water

Please contact Wessex Water on 0345 600 4 600 if you have an emergency water leak out of hours.

Electricity

You will need to contact your own service provider, their emergency contact details should be on your bill.

Vacating the property

Once the property team have been made aware that you will be vacating the property. They will contact you to run through the vacating process.

Please note that on leaving the property you should not leave the property in a worse condition than it was when you took occupation. If the property is deemed to have been damaged or in a worse condition due to negligence of the occupant, the Diocese of Bath and Wells reserve the right to recover the cost of damage caused during the occupancy of the property. The provisions of section 13(4) of the Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 will apply with regard to the occupier paying for repairs resulting from a lack of reasonable care of the property.

Appendix 1

The duties of the Bath and Wells Diocese Board of Finance (the Board) in relation to the property are set out in Regulation 12 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009 (“the Regulations”). Those obligations are:

(a) To keep the property in repair.

(b) To arrange to inspect the property at least every five years and, in the case of a new building, as soon as possible after the building is provided, and for a report to be submitted to the Board describing the state and condition of the property, including the state and condition of the interior, and the grounds and of any contents of the property provided by the Board.

(c) To send a copy of the Surveyor’s report to the office holder and, after consulting the office holder, to carry out within a reasonable time any repairs recommended in the report which appear to the Board to be appropriate.

(d) To pay the Council Tax.

(e) To insure the property against all such risks as are included in the usual form household owner’s policy relating to buildings.

(f) To undertake such works of repair and replacement as are needed:

(1) to keep in repair the structure and exterior of the buildings of the property, including doors, windows, drains, gutters and external pipes.

(2) to keep in repair all walls, fences, gates, drives and drains of the property other than those which some person other than the office holder is wholly liable to repair; and

(3) to keep in repair and proper working order:

(i) the installations in the property for the supply of water, gas and electricity, and for sanitation, including basins, sinks, baths and sanitary conveniences.

(ii) the installations in the property for space heating or water heating; and

(iii) any fixtures, fittings and appliances in the property (other than those mentioned above) provided by the Board, including works of interior decoration necessitated in consequence of the works mentioned above.

The duties of the office holder are set out in Regulation 14 and are as follows:

- (a) To permit the Board, its officers or agents to enter the property in exercise of the Board's rights referred to above.
- (b) To use all reasonable endeavors to keep the property and any contents of the property provided by the Board, clean and free from deterioration, with the exception of fair wear and tear, and to keep any garden or other grounds belonging to the property in a reasonable state of upkeep.
- (c) To notify the Board of any works of repair that may from time to time be needed to the property as soon as reasonably practicable after the office holder becomes aware of them.
- (d) If required to do so by the Board, to the extent that it is not recoverable under any insurance policy, to pay the whole or part of the reasonable cost of any repairs to the property which a report of the Diocesan Surveyor as mentioned in Regulation 12(1)(b) of the Measure authorised by the Board specified to be necessary as a result of damage caused or aggravated by the deliberate act of the office holder or a member of the office holders household residing with him or her or by a breach of the office holders obligations in relation to the property.
- (e) Not to use the property except as a private residence for the office holder and his or her household and for such other purposes as may be agreed by the Board which agreement shall not be unreasonably withheld.
- (f) Not to make any repairs, alterations or additions to the property without the consent of the Board.
- (g) Where the property is held on a lease, to observe any term, condition or covenant binding the tenant under the lease and, in any case, to indemnify the Board in respect of any breach by the office holder or by any member of the office holder's household living in the property of any term, condition or covenant binding on the occupier and
- (h) To vacate the property within the period of one month from the date on which the office holder ceases to hold the office or on which he or she takes up a new office, whichever is the sooner or within such longer period as the Board may allow and to leave the property clean and tidy and clear of all personal possessions belonging to the office holder or any member of his or her household residing in the property.

Appendix 2

Clergy guidelines

5.2 Lodgers or Tenants in a Board Owned Property

5.2.1 Incumbents with Freeholds

There are a few remaining incumbents who hold the Freehold, these incumbents are entitled to have lodgers or tenants however they will need to let the Property Department know as there may be additional costs that need paying to the Board i.e. additional Council tax payments, additional insurance payments etc. Additional guidance/requirements are contained in 5.2.3 below.

5.2.2 Incumbents occupying under the Ecclesiastical Offices Regulations 2009

For all other incumbents who occupy the accommodation under the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009 there is no legal right to take in lodgers/tenants or sublet any part of the parsonage house. The property is to be used as a private residence for the office holder and his or her household and for any other purposes as may be agreed by the relevant housing provider. If an incumbent wishes to take in lodgers, the prior written consent of the Property Department is required. Additional guidance/requirements are contained in

5.2.3 below. The Board does not permit lettings to tenants.

5.2.3 Guidance/requirements for all occupiers allowing Lodgers

- a. You will need to draw up at your expense an appropriate legal agreement which requires prior approval by the Property Department before being documented. A copy once documented is to be supplied to the Property Department
- b. You need to check the immigration status of the lodger before renting the room. This is particularly important if you have an overseas language student. A fine of up to £500 may apply for taking in a lodger without doing an immigration check (for tenants up to £3,000). If an incumbent takes in someone they know or suspect doesn't have the right to rent, an unlimited fine, or a 5-year prison sentence may be imposed.
- c. You need to seek the advice from the diocesan safeguarding adviser as to whether your use of the house would warrant any lodger having to undertake a DBS check and act on that advice (at your cost)

d. You will need to ensure that you do not create a “House of multiple Occupation”. It is therefore your responsibility to ensure that you comply with the licencing arrangements and contact your Local Authority in order to avoid a costly fine, this is not the Boards responsibility.

e. the clergy or other occupant will be regarded as a landlord under Gas Safety (Installation and Use Regulations) 1994 and as such they, and not the Board, are then responsible for the safety of any gas appliances in the sublet accommodation. Additionally, safety regulations regarding the flammability and fillings of furniture apply to items supplied with the sublet part; almost all foam-filled furniture over five years old does not conform. The clergy or other occupant must ensure that the electrical system and any electrical appliances you supply, such as kettles and toasters, are all safe to use.

f. It is important to ensure upon vacation of the house that is handed back to the Property Department with vacant possession with all lodgers and tenants vacated. If there are any legal costs incurred by the Property Department in removing lodgers or tenants these are required to be reimbursed by the incumbent.

5.2.4 Lodger/Tenant definition

For this purpose, a lodger is considered to be anyone who is not part of the occupiers household. The household is defined by the Board as the clergy spouse, civil partner, children of the clergy and/or clergy spouse/civil partner or parents of the clergy or clergy spouse. This policy does not apply where a friend of relative is staying with clergy when their main or sole residence is elsewhere, the period of occupation may not exceed 3 months. There is a significant distinction in law between a lodger and a tenant, the table below sets out the main distinctions:

Lodger	Tenant
Will not have exclusive possession in that he will share possession on most of the property with the clergy or other occupant and the clergy or other occupant will have access to rooms such as a bedroom for cleaning purposes. They will not be able to put a lock on the door and keep the clergy or other occupant out.	Will have exclusive possession for a term, has the legal right to refuse entry to their room
Often (although not essential) the clergy or other occupant will supply services such as cleaning and sometimes provision of bedding or towels or meals.	No services will be provided
The lodger could be moved to a different room in the property	Has exclusive use of rooms.
The covenants for repair imposed on a landlord in the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 do not apply.	Landlord responsible for keeping in repair the structure and exterior of the dwelling as well as various installations in the premises
Does not have the benefit of rent control provisions	Benefit of rent control provisions that apply to an assured short-hold tenant under a periodic tenancy under the Housing Act 1988.
Does not have security of tenure.	Security of tenure for a fixed period
Will pay rent which will include payment for the provision of utilities and other services and council tax	Will pay rent which will not include the payment for the provision of utilities/other services/council tax

5.2.5 Costs

- a. any new or increased costs due to Lodgers/tenants are the responsibility of clergy. The Board requires full reimbursement of all additional costs i.e., higher charge in Council Tax, insurance or Water Charges these will be invoiced by the Property department;
- b. the clergy will indemnify the Board against any other costs which may be incurred due to this arrangement, including wear and tear and legal costs to evict anyone remaining in the property after the clergy leaves.
- c. The clergy must include any income on their personal tax return. It is recommended that the clergy or other occupant takes independent advice on any potential tax liability.

5.2.6 Tenants and commercial letting of rooms (e.g., bed and breakfast, Airbnb)

The Board does not permit clergy to have tenants or to commercially let the property i.e., bed and breakfast, Airbnb.

The property team

James Millard	Head of Property and Glebe
Owain Wynne	Diocesan Surveyor and Property Manager
Annabel Cook	Property Co-ordinator
Alice Gifford	Property Assistant
Kelly Harrison	Property Administrator (part-time non-client facing role)

Fixflo link: bathwellsdiocesepropertymanagement.fixflo.com

Email: property.helpdesk@bathwells.anglican.org

Call: 01749 670777

Monday to Thursday: 9am - 5:15pm

Emergency contacts

Gas

In the event of a suspected gas leak do not operate any electrical equipment or switch on devices or light switches in case of sparks. Make sure there are no sources of flames anywhere. Open all windows and doors if you can safely do so. Turn the gas lever near the meter to off if possible and contact the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999 immediately.

Water

The Board does not permit clergy to have tenants or to commercially let the property i.e., bed and breakfast, Airbnb

Electricity

You will need to contact your own service provider, their emergency contact details should be on your bill.

www.bathandwells.org.uk/clergy-housing

