

All Stipendiary and Non Stipendiary Clergy
All Retired Clergy
All PCC Treasurers
All Churchwardens of Parishes in Vacancy

6th December 2007

Dear Colleague,

I hope all is well with you. I am writing about parochial fees in 2008.

Fee Levels and Expenses

Following the new scale of church fees, recently published by Archbishops Council, the full fee for a funeral service at a cemetery or crematorium will be £96. This is declared or assigned as appropriate. The additional cost to cover transport remains at £17, although if the total journey is over 40 miles you will need to negotiate with the funeral director for the appropriate additional reimbursement based on the Diocesan mileage rate of 40p per mile.

Retired Clergy

We are continuing with the policy introduced on 1 April 2004 that:

- (i) Retired clergy should remit one third of their fees for funerals at crematoria to the DBF.
- (ii) Retired clergy should retain the full fee for funeral services taken in churches.

The attached schedule shows what levels of fee are payable to the DBF and in the different circumstances and, I hope, it is self-explanatory.

The fee payable to retired covering a service outside of their own parish is £27 plus travel expenses.

Retired Non- Stipendiary Clergy

The position over non-stipendiary clergy (NSMs and OLMs) retaining fees for weddings and funerals remains the same, namely that they can retain fees **ONLY** if they meet **ALL** the following criteria:

- (i) They are aged 65 or over
- (ii) They have retired from secular employment

(iii) They have moved from having the Bishop's Licence to having his Permission to Officiate

If non-stipendiary clergy meet all those criteria, then the entitlement to fees is the same for NSMs and OLMs as for Stipendiary Clergy (see above).

The exception is over fees for Sunday or weekday services in the church where the retired non-stipendiary priest normally worships. No fee is payable for those services.

Non-Stipendiary Clergy (NSMs) and Ordained Local Ministers (OLMs)

NSMs and OLMs are not entitled to receive fees personally. The funeral fee should, therefore, be collected from the funeral director and passed to the Incumbent to whom the NSM/OLM is licensed (or the sequestrators in the case of a vacancy). However, NSMs/OLMs are entitled to keep the £17 transport cost and NSMs/OLMs are entitled to claim for compensation for loss of earnings.

Readers

Readers are in the same position as Non-Stipendiary Clergy when, with the goodwill of the clergy and the family, they conduct a funeral at the cemetery or crematorium. Readers should collect the whole fee and pass the £96 to their Incumbent (or sequestrators) and keep up to £17 to cover transport costs.

Specific arrangements with funeral directors

The Retired Clergy Association also states the following:

“It is pastorally wrong, or at least undesirable, for individual retired clergy to enter into any general arrangements with Undertakers or cemetery/crematorium authorities to be ‘available’ to conduct funerals regularly when the family concerned has not contacted parochial clergy”.

We continue to make progress over this and the archdeacons continue to work with funeral directors to improve matters further. However, I repeat in the strongest possible terms the request that clergy do not make unilateral arrangements with funeral directors; these are damaging both to parish and diocesan ministry and fundamentally undermine the nature and grounding of our parish ministry.

Payment of Expenses

As stated above, expenses are payable to NSMs, OLMs, Readers and Retired Clergy. In the case of retired clergy, this is in addition to any fee they may receive. Expenses should be offered to all clergy (including NSMs, OLMs and Readers) who take services at other churches.

PCC Treasurers are encouraged very strongly to pay such expenses automatically, and not place visiting clergy in the difficult position of having to raise the question themselves – this should also apply to retired clergy taking funerals in a church. We also strongly encourage the use of diocesan mileage rates in all cases (currently 40p per mile).

Publishing Fees

Please make sure that the Archbishop's Council Table of Fees is displayed and easily available to parishioners.

Keeping Records

It is important that all ministers keep accurate and up-to-date records of every fee transaction.

Pastoral Care for Bereaved Families

As you are all aware, as a church we seek to support families through their bereavement; it is not just a matter of taking a funeral service. Therefore, if you at any point take a service in a parish church other than your own (whether you are an active or retired Priest or Reader) it is highly desirable that you let the Incumbent know the details of any visits that you have made or any particular concerns raised by the family.

I hope the above is clear and helpful. Please get back to me if not.

Once again, could I thank you for all that you do in and through the ministries covered above. They remain central to our ministry as a church as we touch the lives of people at moments of great celebration and great sadness. Indeed, it is often the first time that as a church we have been in such direct contact with many of the people attending these services. It is a huge mission opportunity as well as a vital ministry. Without them we would all be hugely diminished.

With very best wishes,

Mike Eastwood