

The Common Tenure comes into effect

22 February 2011

A new form of tenure for clergy office holders called “common tenure” came into effect on the 31 January 2011.

As a result, thousands of clergy throughout the Church of England will acquire rights more akin to those in an employment setting as well as responsibilities to develop in their ministry, while maintaining their status as office holders.

Most licensed office holders (whether self-supporting or stipendiary) such as Priests-in-charge, Team Vicars, Assistant Curates and residentiary canons on fixed term appointments automatically transferred on 31st January. Freehold clergy such as Bishops, Archdeacons, incumbents (Vicars and Rectors), Team Rectors and Cathedral clergy have the choice as to whether they transfer from freehold to common tenure. All new appointments will be covered by common tenure.

In the Diocese of Winchester, 147 clergy in the Diocese have automatically transferred to common tenure. During February, those clergy who automatically transferred were each issued with a Statement of Particulars. In April, Bishop Michael will be writing to all clergy with freehold to offer them the possibility of transferring if they so wish.

Common tenure comes as a result of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009 legislation. It confers rights such as an entitlement to a written statement of particulars which sets out the terms of an appointment; entitlement to time off, including maternity, paternity and other forms of leave; access to a grievance procedure and a right of appeal to an employment tribunal in certain circumstances.

Common tenure also confers obligations that encourage accountability and responsibility in ministry such as participation in Ministerial Development Review (MDR) which we know as Pastoral Consultation and CMD Review, Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD), requirements around sickness and health and a capability procedure.

As a result of the legislation, Vicars and Rectors will continue to have formal legal ownership of the Parsonage house while other office holders will acquire the right to accommodation “reasonably suitable for the purpose” and the ability to object to changes to the accommodation.

More about Common Tenure can be found at www.common tenure.org