

PAROCHIAL FEES WORKSHOP

FAQs 2024

For further information about fees refer to the [Guide to Church of England Parochial Fees](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) which are available on the Church of England website. These notes are supplementary to the guidance provided there.

Glossary:

PTO	Permission to Officiate, clergy with permission to officiate, often retired but not always.
LLM	Licensed Lay Minister (Reader), licence changes to LLM PTO at the age of 70.
LLW	Licensed Lay Worker.
SSM	Self-Supporting Minister (used to be called a Non-Stipendiary Minister).
DBF	The Diocesan Board of Finance - the legal company behind diocesan staff, resources etc.
WDBF	Winchester DBF.
SSM PTO	a Self-Supporting Minister with Permission to Officiate.

Resources:

1. Main page, where you can download the annual Table of Fees in full and summary versions
<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/life-events-parochial-fees-and-guidance>
2. A guide to Church of England Parochial Fees
<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/life-events-parochial-fees-and-guidance/guide-church#na>
3. Life events ministry fees FAQs
<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/life-events-parochial-fees-and-guidance/life-events>
4. Wedding Fees form – a template form to explain wedding fees and extras
<https://www.churchsupporthub.org/downloads?tagid=24>
5. Parish Portal for uploading of fees returns: <https://directorywinchester.dioce.se/OnlineDirectory/Pages/>

6. Who Can Claim Fees: <https://winchester.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Who-can-claim-fees-Jun-2023.pdf>
7. WDBF Parochial Fees Table: [Parochial Fees - Diocese of Winchester \(anglican.org\)](#)
8. Occasional Offices Claim form: [Parochial Fees - Diocese of Winchester \(anglican.org\)](#)
9. Guild of Church Musicians: [About us | The Guild of Church Musicians \(gcm.org.uk\)](#)

FAQs:

<p>To whom does the fee for a funeral belong?</p>	<p>If the deceased is on a parish electoral roll, the fee is due to that parish.</p> <p>If the deceased is not on a parish electoral roll, the fee is due to the parish where the deceased resided.</p> <p>Parochial fees belong to the parish of the person who has passed, even if they are not a congregant. The parish is then responsible for allocating and making payment for any monies due to the DBF or PTO taking the service.</p>
<p>What if our Rector takes a funeral in another parish?</p>	<p>See above. The portion of the fee passed to the DBF goes towards the payment of all clergy stipends.</p> <p>A stipendiary clergyperson is not permitted to receive fees directly.</p>
<p>Can a minister claim travel expenses?</p>	<p>Yes. The standard parochial fee does not include travel expenses and you can claim any expenses necessarily and reasonably incurred. See paragraph 42 of the Guide to Church of England Parochial Fees.</p>
<p>Can I accept a flat rate fee from the funeral directors for my expenses?</p>	<p>No. You should only claim your actual expenses.</p> <p>Generally, the Parochial Expenses of the Clergy guide sets out the basis on which clergy expenses should be claimed. The guide is available from the Clergy pay and expenses page of the Church of England website. The rate generally recommended for travel by car is HMRC's rate for mileage allowance payments (currently 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles).</p> <p>If you accept a flat fee for your expenses, you are likely to receive more than the appropriate rate per mile. <i>Payments in excess of this rate are additional income and might attract additional taxation if you have exceeded any personal tax allowances.</i></p>

	<p>Furthermore, for stipendiary clergy, overpayment of expenses is considered to be additional income and can be considered a payment towards the minister's stipend (see section 11(1)(b) of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009). In the Diocese of Winchester, the policy is to deduct any additional income of this kind from stipend (see Financial entitlements, allowances, grants and other benefits, page 2). This can be avoided by only claiming actual expenses.</p> <p>Specifically, in relation to parochial fees, any payment in excess of your actual expenses is in effect an additional fee for the specified service. It is therefore unlawful. You must only claim your actual expenses.</p> <p>As actual travel expenses may not be known until after the event, it is best practice to claim expenses in arrears. If anticipated expenses are claimed in advance, care should be taken to refund any overpayments if plans change.</p>
Can I claim travel expenses for a wedding?	Generally speaking the PCC would pay any reasonable expenses relating to travel for its clergy dealing with weddings throughout the benefice (rather than being claimed back from the couple). If the Vicar is not able to attend, or there is no Vicar, and a retired PTO stands in then it is reasonable for that person to make a claim for any travel expenses from the PCC in question.
When our incumbent has waived fees, the PCC has paid the DBF element, is that right?	The incumbent has the right to waive the DBF portion of the fee in certain circumstances. The PCC can choose to pay it, but it is not required to do so. However, it should be noted that this contribution goes towards paying stipends across the diocese and a reduction in fees paid to the DBF will have a knock-on effect elsewhere. Please have a conversation with your Archdeacon to clarify if circumstances are correct.
Funeral with no relatives, ie a pauper's funeral, is that free?	<p>In cases of clear financial hardship, the incumbent or priest in charge has the right to waive the DBF portion of the fee, and the incumbent or priest in charge can also waive the PCC portion after consulting the churchwardens.</p> <p>The Archdeacon is available to discuss or answer any queries, as are members of the Parish Support Team.</p>
What about burials in woodland cemeteries?	This would be treated as a burial in a cemetery. The woodland aspect makes no difference.
Do you give a refund if a marriage called off?	Yes. The fee is not due until the service is performed, so if a payment has been taken in advance it should be returned in the event of a cancellation.

<p>Is the fee for reading the banns due at the start ie week 1 or when all 3 weeks are read?</p>	<p>The fee is not due until the final reading of the banns, or issue of the certificate for away banns. The fee may be collected in advance but must be returned if the banns are not called for whatever reason.</p>
<p>Memorial services, do fees go to DBF or just PCC? Where does an agreed fee for a marriage blessing go to? Does the fee all go to the PCC? Can we charge a donation for blessing and keep it all?</p>	<p>While there are no set fees for memorial services or wedding blessings, the work involved is often equivalent to a funeral or wedding itself, therefore it is possible to ask for a donation (in line with the equivalent parochial fee). The DBF portion of the fee does not need to be collected, but if it is collected, it may remain with the PCC.</p> <p>If your incumbent is not available and a PTO clergyperson is asked to take a memorial or wedding blessing, it is recommended that they should be invited to claim the sum that would be due to them as if it were a statutory fee.</p>
<p>Can we charge for a baptism?</p>	<p>No; the ability to charge a fee for the occasional office of baptism was abolished in the 1870s under the aptly entitled Baptismal Fees Abolition Act 1872. It is not permissible therefore to charge a fee for the administration of the occasional office of baptism - and why baptism does not feature on the statutory list of fees.</p> <p>While the addition of 60 or so people at the Sunday Service may cause disruption, there is simply no provision to permit charging for taking a baptism.</p> <p>You can charge for extras, provided they are agreed in advance but not for the service itself.</p> <p>And if the service is not a baptism but a service of thanksgiving or naming then you can charge whatever fee is agreed.</p>
<p>Do SSM PTOs receive fees?</p>	<p>Yes, please see Who Can Claim Fees (in this Diocese).</p>
<p>Can a lay person who is not an LLM conduct a funeral? Currently a trained lay person takes our funerals. Are they PTO?</p>	<p>No, within the Church of England only licenced lay people (normally LLMs) are trained to undertake funerals. Licenced Lay Workers (LLW) and Deaconesses are also allowed to take funerals under the Canons.</p> <p>When an LLM reaches the age of 70, their licence becomes an LLM PTO, but this name change makes no difference to their licence or their ministry.</p>
<p>Who can use the church for services?</p>	<p>The Ecumenical Canons (Canon B43) allow for an Anglican church to be used by ministers of other designated churches pursuant to the Church of England Ecumenical Relations Measure 1988. Please check with the Diocesan Registrar's team if you are asked by another denomination/faith to use the church building. Only those authorised by the Church of England may lead Anglican worship. There is now a Register of Ordained Ministers available here. Or please ask the diocesan office to confirm the authority of a Lay Minister if they are unknown to you.</p>

<p>How do we log on to the Portal?</p>	<p>Use the email address provided to the Diocese as your primary contact and go to https://directorywinchester.dioce.se/OnlineDirectory/Pages/ and proceed to the Click Here button to create a new password to log on.</p>
<p>Do you have a quarterly form that we need for filling in?</p>	<p>The template form is available to download on the portal, or if you cannot access this, please email parish.support@winchester.anglican.org.</p>
<p>For the quarterly form, if we make a mistake, or a fee is late (e.g. a funeral that we forgot to include) do we go back and edit previous quarter, or include it in next quarter? If the quarterly form gets full, do we add lines or have two forms?</p>	<p>If there is a mistake, we suggest that edits/alterations are made on any future return. It is difficult to return money and easier to correct retrospectively. Please add lines to the template form as necessary and keep all returns to one page. Services should be recorded on the form with the date they were taken. In exceptional circumstances, ie there has been a delay to the parish receiving payment of their fee, it is possible to include a service in the next quarter's return.</p>
<p>For the signatures, how do we clarify / verify church warden signature if all online? Do you require digital signatures for electronic submission? Just clarifying two signatures are required, not just one? Who is the PCC officer on the form?</p>	<p>Please get email authorisation from Churchwarden and PCC officer, so that you can use this as a paper trail/audit that the return has been agreed upon. You do not have to share this evidence with the diocese. A PCC officer is anyone that is a PCC member.</p>
<p>Our fees are dealt with by our Benefice, which looks after 5 parishes. Is that ok? Do we need to identify each parish in benefice?</p>	<p>Parochial fees belong to the parish, but the admin may be performed at benefice level if that is convenient. The fee return form should still breakdown separate fees for each parish. The portal also offers the ability to upload Benefice forms.</p>
<p>What needs to be included in the fees return - ALL fees charged for the office or just the ones that go through the PCC books, sometimes our organist is paid directly?</p>	<p>All fees should go into the PCC bank account and then be divided between the DBF and the other recipients, to show complete transparency and an audit trail.</p>

Who can we refer to as treasurers if we disagree with our clergy's interpretation of the requirements?	Seek guidance from the Parish Support Team at the DBF who will refer to the guidance or speak to the registry, as necessary.
Where do we as a parish store all this info?	This information can be stored digitally.
What happens if we don't do online banking?	Cheques are accepted for fee returns. Please send these in via post to Diocesan Office, Old Alresford Place, Alresford SO24 9DH.
How do we work out heating costs? Should it vary with length of service?	It doesn't have to be exact. Use a recent bill or your annual cost to arrive at an hourly rate, then charge appropriately.
Double funeral - do we charge one fee as there is only one funeral service, or do we double it because it's a funeral for two people?	If both sets of ashes are to be interred at the same time, into the same space, then it is acceptable for the Vicar to agree to charge just the one fee although there is an argument for charging for two fees as the administration of dealing with two sets of ashes remains as it would if they were dealt with separately, (ensuring they are both appropriately recorded etc). The Incumbent can agree to waive the fee on consultation with the churchwardens. And they would wish to consult the PCC too.
Is our church organist entitled to be paid a fee for a wedding / funeral service, even if the couple / family don't want an organist?	<p>Music at an occasional office event is optional and not included in the statutory fee. You can, therefore, charge an additional fee for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - providing the church organist to play the organ; - allowing the organ to be used by another organist (eg a family friend); - providing an operator to play a CD or recorded music over the audio system. <p>These additional fees must be set at a reasonable level, and should only be charged to the couple or family if they have agreed to pay for it as an 'extra'.</p> <p>Some church organist contracts (including the RSCM template contract) entitle the organist to be paid a fee <u>by the PCC</u> if music is provided by another organist, by other instruments (eg a band or string quartet) or in a recorded form (eg on CD). In other words, the PCC under-writes the organist's fees, even if the organist isn't required. Note that this fee is paid by the PCC as part of its contract with the organist; it should <u>not</u> be passed on to the couple / family. Check the organist's contract if you are not sure.</p>
If our own LLM takes a funeral then is he/she entitled to the 2/3 fee?	A LLM licensed to a benefice is seen a part of the team ministry so they are not entitled to 2/3 of the fee. If he/she is a LLM outside of the benefice, then they can claim a fee.

<p>Does the cost of a gravedigger come out of the PCC portion of the fee or should a separate charge be made to the undertaker/family for this service?</p>	<p>As far as we are aware the PCC statutory fee does not include the digging of the grave (whether a full grave or an ashes interment). This is confirmed by the Guide to Parochial Fees https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/life-events-parochial-fees-and-guidance/guide-church#na</p> <p>Scroll down to: Grave-digging</p> <p>10. The fees for burials do not include charges for grave-digging and subsequent filling in and making good. The cost of this, if the work is done by a parochial officer, should be regulated from time to time by the incumbent and parochial church council. The charges for any bricklaying or mason's work will also be additional.”</p>
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In the case of a marriage service or a funeral service in church, any costs and expenses incurred in respect of routine administration (including arranging dates and times and the making of entries in registers), making the church available and lighting it are included in the fee prescribed as payable to the Parochial Church Council.

EXTRAS: The fees shown in the table do not include charges for heating, the services of a verger, music (eg, organist, choir), bells, and flowers, which are fixed by the Parochial Church Council. Optional extras should be charged at a reasonable fee.

Using the wedding booking form available from the Church Support Hub can help couples understand what is optional, but also the benefits of those optional extras if they choose to take them: [cofe_03091_weddingfees2021_form.pdf \(d3hgrrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net\)](#). For instance:

‘Vergers are optional but can make a real difference to the smooth running of your wedding. Ask your vicar how they can help.’

Adapt the form to your needs, detailing the cost of optional extras if provided by the church vs an external supplier.