



DIOCESE of
WINCHESTER

Guidelines on Working With Retired Clergy

Steps Towards Encouraging, Supporting and Better Defining Relationships Between Parish Clergy and Retired Clergy

1. Introduction

The 200 or so retired clergy (whether formerly stipendiary or SSM) who live, or worship, in the Winchester Diocese can now expect to have longer years of healthy retirement than ever before and many wish to continue in some form of active, post-retirement ministry. Many work successfully in ministerial roles in parishes, but the experience can be 'hit and miss' and can sometimes lead to frustration and underutilisation of a valuable resource. These Guidelines are an attempt to put the relationships between retired clergy, parish clergy and the Diocese on a firmer foundation to the benefit of all.

2. Expectations and Responsibilities for Parish Clergy

2.1 When a member of the clergy retires to your parish or you move into a parish where there is a retired priest, arrange to meet with them to discuss options for ministry within the parish.

2.2 Remember that the newly retired may find it helpful to take a 'sabbatical' for a while (six months is often used as a good rule of thumb here), as they discern what kind of future ministry God might be calling them to.

2.3 In agreeing options, the parish needs to understand that the priest is retired and offering his/her services as a volunteer; often with other commitments (such as family).

2.4 It can be helpful to ascertain whether the retired priest is looking for regular opportunities for ministry or offering to be available for support where this might be needed. It may be that for reasons of church tradition (or other reasons) the retired priest is seeking to offer to help elsewhere in the Diocese. Such a choice should be respected.

2.5 Please ensure retired clergy are aware of The Clerical Registry and given the contact details for the current officer.

2.6 If they are not aware of the existence of Diocesan Clergy Retirement Officers (CRO) please let them know about this and give them contact details for the relevant CRO.



2.7 Be clear about financial matters such as expenses (where/if relevant), and the fixed rule payments for funerals and weddings and procedures for receiving these.

2.8 Explore opportunities for sharing in the regular prayer life of the clergy/ ministry team/parish, as is appropriate to its tradition.

2.9 Producing a simple written agreement for the ministry the retired priest can offer is a way of clarifying what has been discussed and avoiding misunderstanding.

2.10 Such an agreement should be reviewed annually, or when circumstances (on either side) change. Such a 'review' also offers the opportunity for the parish to express its gratitude to the retired priest for their ministry. (NB An annual token, thank you gift-in-kind [non-monetary] from the PCC might be considered and is often a very welcome way of expression gratitude and affirmation).

2.11 If the retired priest wishes to minister within the parish you must check they have Permission To Officiate from the Bishop of Winchester before they minister. (NB In some cases a retired priest may be licensed by the Bishop; where this is the case more formal arrangements will have been made for a working agreement).

2.12 Do check that a retired priest has access to information about the life of the Diocese, its aims, objectives, policies and procedures (especially if they are new to the Diocese) and are receiving updates that might be useful to them.

3. Expectations and Responsibilities for Retired Clergy

3.1 When retiring into a parish it is both a courtesy and good practice to let the parish priest know who you are. Meeting with the parish priest to discuss what you can offer to the life of the parish is helpful to them and to you. It may be that your choice is to minister or worship in another parish (perhaps, for example, for reasons of tradition); it can be helpful for the parish priest to know this rather than discover it second hand.

3.2 When first retired it has often been found helpful to take a 'sabbatical' while you discern to what kind of future ministry God is calling you (six months is often used as a good rule of thumb here).

3.3 In discussing your involvement with the parish priest it is important to understand the needs, vision and mission of the parish, and of course to remember that any area of ministry must have the agreement of the parish priest. Care should also be taken to respect the 'house style' of the parish.

3.4 Producing a simple written agreement for the ministry you can offer is a way of clarifying what has been discussed and avoiding misunderstanding. (Remember that with PTO a priest is acting as a volunteer; it is only those licensed who have a right to be on the PCC and would expect to be present at staff meetings etc).

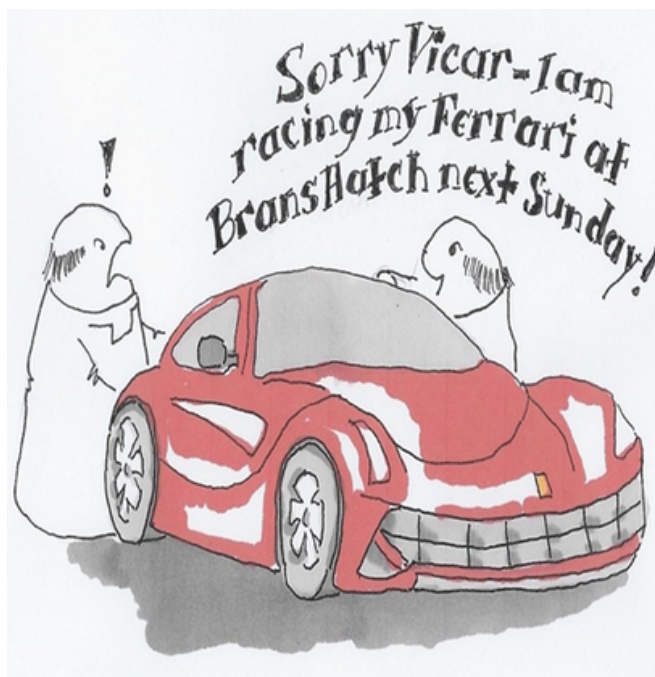


3.5 Such an agreement should be reviewed annually or when circumstances (on either side) change. From your side this may be family responsibilities, health issues or other commitments. From the parish side this might be, amongst other things, to provide space for a curate or ministry opportunities for the laity; or seeking more support during a vacancy.

3.6 Do find out about financial matters such as expenses (where/if relevant), payments for funerals and weddings and procedures for receiving these. Different dioceses have different policies and pay different amounts.

3.7 Remember that to minister within a parish you need to have Permission To Officiate or a licence from the Bishop of Winchester. (This will entail a DBS check and abiding by all safeguarding procedures and training requirements in operation within the Diocese). In both cases 'Guidelines for the professional conduct of the clergy' apply.

3.8 There is a Clergy Retirement Officer for each Archdeaconry. If you haven't had contact with your CRO ask for details from the parish priest or Diocesan office. The CRO and parish priest should, between them, ensure you have the information you need about the Diocese, its aims, objectives, policies and procedures, and Diocesan and National support for retired clergy.



4. Expectations and Responsibilities for The Diocese

4.1 The Diocese aims to offer clergy (both nearing retirement and recently retired) access to courses and meetings designed to help with this transition. Pre-retirement discussions with Bishops will include an exploration of opportunities that exist to continue some form of ministry in retirement.

4.2 Where appropriate, the Diocese will enable retired clergy to apply for 'Permission To Officiate' PTO from the diocesan bishop or, if applicable, to be licensed to a particular parish, deanery or ministry, to work in the Diocese and to meet any safeguarding procedures in operation.

4.3 Clergy retiring into the Diocese and seeking PTO or a licence will be invited to meet with the relevant suffragan bishop.

4.4 The continuation of ministry by retired clergy into retirement is judged to be advantageous both to retired clergy and the Diocese. The Diocese will endeavour to promote the benefits and advantages of this relationship in a way that takes account both of the needs of the Diocese and the wishes and gifting of individual retired clergy.

4.5 Where retired clergy choose to continue some form of ministry into retirement the Diocese will provide relevant guidance, support and training to enable them to perform effectively both to the benefit of the Diocese and to their own satisfaction.

4.6 Once retired clergy are not directly involved in the 'day to day' activities of the Diocese they can find it difficult to keep in touch with any changes and developments that are taking place. This is an especially difficult challenge for those who move into the Diocese on retirement. The Diocese will try to keep retired clergy in the picture by providing appropriate information on diocesan aims, objectives, policies and procedures so that retired clergy are able to work within this framework as part of the overall diocesan team. One way of doing this is the publication of an occasional news sheet entitled 'Oldhabits'.

4.7 Making the best use of time given by retired clergy, especially in a Parish, does require some thought by parish priests and the Diocese will offer guidance on how to identify opportunities, and how to support and work successfully with retired clergy who might take these up.

4.8 Some deaneries include retired clergy in their Chapter. Whether or not this is the case, the relevant Area Dean will be kept up to date with information on retired clergy with PTO or holding a licence in their deanery.

4.9 As part of its responsibilities towards retired clergy the Diocese will appoint a Clergy Retirement Officers for each Diocesan Archdeaconry to keep an overview of issues relating to retired clergy and act as a communication link between retired clergy, the Diocese and, where appropriate, the wider church.

4.10 The Diocese will seek to encourage good relationships between retired clergy and parish priests by promoting good practice and addressing any problems that may arise between retired clergy and parish priests, the Diocese or its staff.



- The Ven Richard Brand, Archdeacon of Winchester
- The Revd John Dawson, Retired Clergy Officer for the Northern Archdeaconry
- Currently Vacant - Retired Clergy Officer for the Southern Archdeaconry

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Illustrations by The Revd Peter Murphy

The Very Common Lectionary

(www.verycommonlectionary.com)