

4 July 2023

Dear Churchwardens, PCC Treasurers, PTO Clergy and Readers

Change to the Process for Claiming Fees for taking Services during Vacancies

I am writing to all parishes to update you on the arrangements for paying fees and expenses to visiting ministers when a parish is in vacancy. This may not affect you now, but you may need to be aware for the future. We know that vacancies can be a busy time, and we are grateful for all you do to support our parishes through those times. Please note that this change in process will bring us into line with the existing practice in many other dioceses.

It remains the responsibility of the DBF to cover the costs of providing clerical cover for essential parish services during vacancies. We are only changing the process by which these fees are paid. The reason for the change is that the DBF currently receives a large volume of claim forms, and these are sometimes delayed or lost when they are forwarded by parishes. There are also delays in payment when the bank details for the visiting minister are not provided on the form.

Therefore we are asking PCCs to take responsibility for paying the appropriate fee and travel expenses to the visiting minister. This should ensure that the visiting minister is paid promptly, and the information flow should be smoother as there will be interactions between the PCC and the minister who is coming to the church.

The PCC will be able to claim reimbursement from the DBF for the costs incurred on fees and expenses. We are recommending that reimbursement is claimed on a quarterly basis. A new simple form has been created which can be used by PCCs to make their claim.

The claim forms and information can be found at <https://www.chichester.anglican.org/information-for-parishes-in-vacancy/>

The DBF also remains responsible for paying the costs of clerical cover during periods of clergy sickness. Claim forms can either be sent direct to the DBF under the old process, or paid by the PCC and claimed back.

With many thanks for all you do to support ministry in the Diocese of Chichester.

Regards

Catherine Dawkins
Finance Director