

Checklist for Vacant Parsonage Sequestration

1. **Moving date**

Please liaise with the occupier to find out their moving date so that you can prepare for setting up your responsibilities as sequestrators. These are outlined below.

2. **Keys and Vacant Inspections**

If Parish Officers hold any spare keys for the property, these must be returned to the occupier before they vacate. We will then ask the occupier to leave front door keys in the key safe on the day that they leave. Churchwardens should use the key safe to gain access during the vacancy to conduct any inspections, collect mail etc, and leave all other keys inside the property, in a safe place that is out of sight.

It is an insurance obligation that the property is checked each week and a record of the check is kept. Parish Officers/Churchwardens should inform the Property Department of any issues such as security breaches, vandalism or property damage.

3. **Frost and flood protection**

The Property Department will arrange for the boiler, central heating and water systems to be decommissioned and drained down to protect from leak damage in line with the Diocese insurance obligations. The contractor will gain access via the key safe.

4. **Utilities**

Electric: It is the parish's responsibility to pay bills, standing charges and submit regular metre readings whilst the property is vacant. On the day the occupier vacates, please ask them for the final meter readings and a photograph of the meter, you will then submit these to the provider when you set up a new account.

Water: The priest will inform the water provider that they have vacated the property and submit a meter reading (if possible). They will also pass this reading onto the PCC Treasurer. The Parish should cancel any standing orders or direct debits relating to the account for the priests occupation. Inform the provider that the property is unoccupied and unfurnished. Some providers do not charge during a vacancy, depending upon whether there is a meter and if any water is being used. Vacant bills will usually be addressed to "The Occupier" and the Parish is responsible for paying these and reporting readings (if there is a meter) periodically during the vacancy.

5. **Council Tax**

Inform the council that the priest has moved out, and that the house is now empty. The property will then be deemed Class H Exempt (Awaiting Occupation by a Minister of Religion).

6. **Cleaning and Clearance**

We will ask for the house to be completely cleared of all furniture and personal belongings. If the Parish made arrangements with the priest to use any part of the vicarage as an office or meeting space, any equipment such as desks, filing cabinets and photocopiers will also need to be removed by the priest's moving date.

7. Letting a Parsonage

If the Archdeacon asks Property Department to explore letting the Parsonage House during the vacant period, Property Dept will let the Parish know and explain the letting procedure including handover of utilities to the new occupant. The Surveyor will carry out an ingoing inspection and instruct a contractor to carry out works.

If a letting does proceed, the Property Department will contact the PCC to explain the process and arrangements for bills when a tenancy starts. The Property Department will give a copy of the tenancy inventory containing the meter readings to the Parish so that the Parish may close the 'vacant' utility accounts when the tenancy starts. The Property Department may reimburse the Parish for the vacant period subject to receiving copies of the vacant bills after the tenancy start date.

For further information about the Parish's responsibilities during vacancies, please see the [Diocesan Vacancy Guide](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the Property Department by calling 01273 425683 or emailing property@chichester.anglican.org.