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**An introduction**

**to the vacancy** **process**

**in your**

**Benefice**

**2025**

**Your vicar is leaving – what happens now?**

Don’t panic! We are going to guide you through the vacancy process.

This is often a time where God moves powerfully and in significant ways in a congregation. Prayer is always appreciated, for your departing priest, your churchwardens and the new person whom God is calling to lead your Benefice.

1. Once you have said farewell to your outgoing priest, the churchwardens will be key in the day to day running of your parish(es), and your Area Dean will be your first point of contact for help and support. A guidance booklet to support the churchwardens through the vacancy will be sent to them. The churchwardens will benefit from sharing this load with others.

**How to contact your Area Deans**:

Insert details of Area Deans

e.g. XX Deneary name email

1. **How to contact your Archdeacon**:

The Venerable name email

Postal address:

or PA name email

XXX Episcopal Area office – tel.

Opening times:

1. As soon as a vacancy is announced, the Archdeacon will be in touch to discuss what happens next. This may be to arrange to meet key people in the parish or just to discuss a timeline for the vacancy.
2. The process for moving towards an appointment of a new priest to the benefice is governed by various legislation, most particularly by *The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986* and *The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011*. Under the first of these, there are several meetings that normally happen. The Mission and Pastoral Secretary (Deborah Thorley, deborah.thorley@leeds.anglican.org, 0113 3530 273) oversees this legislation. She is supported by the Team Co-ordinator of the Church Buildings and Pastoral Reorganisation team (Gemma Shearwood, gemma.shearwood@leeds.anglican.org, 0113 3530 226) who will be your main contact at the Diocesan Office.
3. The Archdeacon will meet with the Churchwardens or full PCC after the outgoing priest has announced that they are leaving the parish. The Archdeacon will explain the overall vacancy process. This will include a discussion about the type of appointment (incumbent, priest in charge, interim) and outline a rough timetable. The Episcopal Area Mission and Pastoral Committee and the Bishop’s Staff will need to agree what type of appoitnment will be made. This is called a **Pre Section 11 meeting**, because the Archdeacon will explain what the PCC needs to do under section 11 of *The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986.*
4. Vacancy paperwork
* **Parish Profile** - describes the needs and traditions of the parish. This is the formal document to meet the requirement of the Measure.
A blank copy, with some data already filled in, will be sent to the PCC Secretary.
* **Form 34 –** Each PCC in the benefice must normally choose two of its lay membersto be their representatives in the appointment process, and notify this choice to the Diocese using Form 34 (a blank copy of which will be sent to the PCC Secretary for completion).
* **Brochure** this is used to inform applicants about the parish.
The guidance document *‘Writing a Sucessful Parish Brochure’* will be sent to the PCC Secretary.

**Timeline**

*Intital meeting after vacancy announced (if needed)*

*Pre Section 11 Meeting* Overview of the vacancy process.

*Section 11 PCC Meeting* PCC Meeting to agree parish profile and elect parish reps. Inform

Archdeacon of date.

*Section 12 Meeting* This must be held within 6 months of the PCC section 11 meeting. Co-ordinate a date with the Bishop, Archdeacon, Patron, Lay Chair of Deanery Synod and Area Dean. Brochure agreed.

*Advert for new Priest* Once the profile, brochure and other papers have been agreed, the vacancy can be advertised. A closing date and interview date will be discussed with the Bishop, Archdeacon, Patron and parish reps. Posts are advertised via the online *Pathways* system.
(If parishes wish to additionally advertise, e.g in the *Church Times*, this is at their own expense).

*Announcement* The outcome of the interviews remains confidential until a candidate has been offered the post and has accepted. An official announcment will then be made by the Bishop of Leeds’ office.

*Licensing* The Area Dean will co-ordinate the Licensing service with the Benefice.

**Overview of Paperwork**

There is quite a bit of paperwork associated with a vacancy. The table below gives an

overview.

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| What? | Sent by? | Sent to? | When? |
| Going into vacancy – A practical Guide for Churchwardens | Archdeacon’s office | Churchwardens | At first vacancy meeting |
| Introduction booklet | Archdeacon’s office | Churchwardens and PCC Secretary | At first vacancy meeting |
| Parsonage House Guidance | Diocesan Office (Property team) | Churchwardens | Before vacancy date |
| Parish Profile Proforma | Diocesan Office | PCC Secretary | Before Section 11 meeting |
| Form 34 | Diocesan Office | PCC Secretary | Before Section 11 meeting |
| Parish Brochure Booklet | Diocesan Office | PCC Secretary | After Section 11 meeting |
| Examples of Brochures | Archdeacon’s Office | PCC Secretary | After Section 11 meeting |
| Parish Profile | PCC Secretary | Diocesan Office and Archdeaon’s Office | After Section 11 meeting |
| Form 34 | PCC Secretary | Diocesan Office and Archdeacon’s Office | After Section 11 meeting |
| Brochure | PCC Secretary | Diocesan Office and Archdeacon’s Office | After Section 12 meeting |
| Welcoming Your New Priest | Diocesan Office | Churchwardens | Once announcemnt has been made |

A more detailed booklet explaining the legal processes involved in the vacany can be found on the diocesan website.