

**A Vacancy in the**

**Benefice:**

**Welcoming your new Priest**

**The New Priest Arrives**

It may be up to 3 months after the announcement of the name of the new priest before they actually take up their new post. During this time, there are two things to do:-

1/ make arrangements to get the parsonage house ready

2/ prepare a service of Welcome (Institution/Collation/Licensing)

**1/ The House**

The Property Manager will meet the new priest on site to go through the ingoing works at the parsonage house that may have already been completed or may be in progress and to answer any queries the new priest may have. All keys to the house held by the churchwardens should be handed over to the new priest along with codes and instructions on the alarm, the boiler/heating and any other equipment in the property.

**2/ The Service**

The churchwardens will be consulted about the proposed date for the Service of Welcome (Institution/Collation/ Licensing) of the new priest. When a date is agreed, they should make sure this is known in the parish/benefice as soon as possible and that any parish/benefice meetings due to take place on that evening (or Saturday) are cancelled.

The archdeacon’s office and Area Dean will be able to help the churchwardens plan the Welcome Service. The archdeacon’s office will give advice concerning the wording of invitations, people who should receive invitations and the arrangements before, during and after the Service. The content of the worship is agreed by the bishop after consultation with the incoming priest. Copies of the service booklet, which incorporate the hymns, should be printed for the whole congregation. All costs of the Welcome Service and accompanying programme fall upon the PCC. The collection at the Welcome Service should be sent to the diocese to support the work of our link dioceses.

When your new priest arrives they will appreciate a detailed briefing on the benefice before they start work. This might include some informal discussions with other members of staff and with the churchwardens.

Remember that the new priest will not only be starting a new ministry but will have moved house and location as well. They will need some help and guidance in finding their way around. Welcome and support that is sensitive but not overbearing makes for a very good start for a good working relationship.