

# The Archdeacon of Maidstone

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Dear Colleagues,

## Parochial Fees

The Diocese recognises the significant ministry that the church offers to those preparing for marriage and those facing bereavement - thank you for this often unseen 'alongside ministry' with people in their deepest needs and all that you give. The pastoral significance of this ministry is neither separate from the church's mission or our diocesan priorities but integral to them. Neither is it separate from significant debate about the income that comes with these occasional offices.

This letter is to bring you up to date with recent National and Diocesan decisions about Parochial Fees from 2013. Some guidance notes by way of FAQs are available on the [national CofE website](#). Our own diocese will have our own FAQ sheet which will be available on [our website](#).

### A National Inclusive Fee Principle

As you will have already seen the new fees table shows significant increases for the occasional office for 2013 with a small percentage increase for 2014 (already agreed). The increased fees payable to the PCC (e.g. weddings from £126 this year to £206 in 2013) are now inclusive of administration and the use of the church, although a voluntary donation can be invited. The advertised fee is intended to include all that is necessary for the service. Extras would include organist\*, bells ringers, additional heating, flowers etc. and all these 'extras' could be said 'no' to and the service still take place.

### DBF Fees

The National church has agreed that from January 2013 the Fees that were previously 'payable Toward Stipend of Incumbent' are now the legal property of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF). In turn our DBF have agreed this will no longer be automatically returned to the parishes. Rather the DBF will use these fees to:

1. pay for the ministry offered by retired clergy and other non-stipended ministers (lay and ordained).
2. recompense parishes whose income from these fees in the past was significant\*\*,
3. contribute to a grant pool to support mission posts across the diocese.

It will be inappropriate in future for Funeral Directors to make cheques payable to any individual; it must be to either the PCC or the DBF.

### Crematorium Funerals

For the first time the PCC now have a fee relating to Crematorium funerals and these need to be included in their funeral and financial records. If PTO or other licensed ministers are taking funerals for people from your parish it is important that protocols are established between them, the parish and the funeral directors. It is a legal duty to pass the fees on to the parish of the deceased and to the DBF. The PTO or other licensed minister must not deduct their fee from this money. PCC treasurers will usually receive the DBF part of the crematorium fees as they have been doing for weddings and church funerals and they will pass these on and record them in the monthly returns. The DBF will then reimburse ministers according to their individual agreements.

### Formula for Parish Compensation\*\*

It is important that your parish continues to complete the returns to the DBF each month. As soon as 2012 is ended (sooner if possible) we will use these returns to calculate the grant payable to parishes

for 2013 which will be agreed with each parish. The formula below is a guide and detailed information will be forwarded to the Parish treasurer.

### Waiving Fees

The National Archbishop's Council discourages the waiving or discounting of fees for significant church members and suggests that the criteria in the future only be on the grounds of financial hardship. An Incumbent (PiC etc.) may only discount the PCC fee with the consent of a churchwarden and our diocesan guidelines say that to waive the DBF fee an Archdeacon be consulted.

No fee should be charged for the funeral of a child under 16.

If you have any queries on these matters please in the first place contact our Director of Finance, Mark Spraggins.

Stephen Taylor  
**Archdeacon of Maidstone**

Philip Down  
**Archdeacon of Ashford**

Sheila Watson  
**Archdeacon of Canterbury**

\* RSCM 2012 guidelines for organist fees:  
Professional Organist

'Normal' Wedding £71.00 'Normal' funeral £59.50

Amateur Organist

'Normal' Wedding £46.00 'Normal' funeral £39.50

With additional charges for 'substantial' contribution beyond hymns and voluntaries, and for rehearsals etc. Full details of recommendations obtainable from the RSCM

\*\* Formula for DBF fees paid to parishes

2010-2012 Fees as % of Parish Share	2013 grant as % of Fees
≥10%	100%
≥8%<10%	80%
≥6%<8%	60%
≥4%<6%	40%
≥2%<4%	20%
>0%<2%	0%

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