



MINISTERIAL FEES AND EXPENSES

A Code of Practice - 2026

The Diocese of Lichfield

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The Diocese continues to be immensely well-served by Self Supporting Ministry such as Readers, NSMs and OLMs, who receive no remuneration for the work they undertake. In addition to this, a significant number of retired stipendiary clergy also give generously of their time and energy in pastoral and liturgical ministry. This Code of Practice seeks to set out the basis of payment of expenses and fees to such ministers. This code of practice first came into force with effect from 01 April 2005, following the approval of the Finance and Central Services Committee (FACS) in November 2004 and ratification at Bishop's Council in February 2005. The code is updated annually, and this paper reflects the changes approved by Finance and Asset Management Committee (formerly FACS) in November 2025 and are applicable from 01 January 2026.

1. Expenses

- 1.1. The principle followed is that all proper expenses should be reimbursed by the Parochial Church Council or other appropriate body (see below). These are generally travelling expenses, and in this Diocese, the following car mileage rates apply (as agreed by Finance and Asset Management Committee in November 2024). A daily mileage log must be kept and made available to the treasurer when claiming – claims should be made monthly.
 - (a) Full rate (currently 45p per mile; subject to the Finance Bill 2026; March 2026) up to 10,000 miles per annum. The 10,000-mile limit applies to the **total** mileage of the minister for parish, diocesan and other official duties. It is the individual's responsibility to keep records. These may be checked by HMRC
 - (b) Second Rate (25p per mile) for annual mileage in excess of 10,000 in a year.

The Diocesan Policy also recommends an additional 5p per mile is claimed where it can be demonstrated Car Sharing has occurred; defined where there is clearly a case of one car has been used when normally more than one would have been used.

- 1.2. Travelling expenses are paid by the Parochial Church Council (except in the case of funerals or interregna and protracted periods of holiday or illness for which special arrangements have been made – See Vacancy Support Fund).
- 1.3. Retired stipendiary clergy should be offered reimbursement at the full rate at 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles.
- 1.4. Readers, NSMs and OLMs **should be reimbursed** at whichever rate has been agreed between them and the Parochial Church Council, except when conducting Sunday worship in the Church or one of the Churches which they might normally attend if not officiating. The recommended Diocesan rate is 45p per mile.
- 1.5. Travelling expenses for a funeral, whether in Church, at a cemetery or crematorium, should be paid by the Funeral Director to the PCC to reimburse the Minister concerned for actual expenses incurred. Fees should be paid either directly to the PCC or the Diocese who will reimburse any fees due to Ministers accordingly.

1.6. Where an NSM, OLM or Reader incurs loss of earnings in order to conduct a wedding or a funeral he/she may claim additional expenses, not exceeding the 'casual service fee' (see below) **provided that** such arrangements are first agreed, in writing, with the Parochial Church Council concerned and the Bishop or Archdeacon. **They are not permitted to receive a fee.** The concept of Self-Supporting Ministers receiving fees was discussed at Bishop's Council in November 2012 and September 2015. It was decided at present not to allow fees to be received by these Ministers; unless there is a Special Agreement in place approved by the Diocesan Pay and Conditions Committee.

2. Fees – Weddings and Funerals

2.1. All fees received by stipendiary clergy from the 1st January 2013 are deemed to form part of the Diocesan income and due to the Diocesan Board of Finance, including fees at crematoria or cemeteries. In the case of NSMs, OLMs or Readers, any fees received by them should be passed to the Treasurer of the Parish to whom they are licensed or in whose parish they are conducting the service, unless there is a **written special agreement (this is different to any Statement of Particulars)** in place where the officiant may keep an element of the fee.

2.2. All fees for occasional offices are now payable to the DBF, including when in interregnum. Any expenses incurred may be reclaimed from the Diocesan Board of Finance via the Vacancy Support Fund (previously known as the Sequestration Fund).

2.3. The practice of waiving statutory fees has been relaxed under the new Fees Measure from 2013. A PCC has more power to waive fees if they so wish both local and statutory. In order to do this the Minister in Charge plus the Wardens must document the reasons for a fee being waived and present this to the PCC where the reason and date is required to be recorded. **The DBF fee can only be waived with written consent from the Diocesan Office.**

2.4. **The law provides that no fee is chargeable for the funeral of a child within eighteen years of their birth.**

2.5. With the exception of retired stipendiary clergy, no stipendiary or non-stipendiary or ordained local minister, or reader, may personally benefit from a fee for any service, unless there is a written special agreement or job description provides that they may receive fees (e.g. House for Duty).

2.6. If an incumbent or priest-in-charge is unable to conduct a wedding or funeral, whether because of holiday, days off or clashing commitments, other stipendiary or non-stipendiary ministers may be asked to conduct the service. Where a retired minister agrees to conduct the service, the fee belongs to the Diocesan Board of Finance. Payment to a retired minister should be in accordance with the Diocesan Board of Finance fee for occasional offices.

2.7. During an interregnum or an extended period of absence of stipendiary clergy it is expected that the Rural Dean or churchwardens will arrange for funerals and weddings to be conducted by stipendiary or non-stipendiary clergy. Fees are sent to the Diocesan Board of Finance. Where it is not possible for a stipendiary or non-stipendiary to officiate, retired clergy may be asked to take such a service, but the fee then belongs to the DBF and must be paid to the Board of Finance. **Please refer to the notes on Vacancy Support Fund and Running a Vacancy documents.** The Rural Dean on behalf of the Board of Finance then authorises the payment of the retired clergy fee at the rate in force at the time. (see 5 below).

3. Fees – Holy Communion, Morning and Evening Prayer and Family Services etc

- 3.1. Whenever clergy are required to take services in the absence of an incumbent or minister-in-charge (for example when clergy are sick, or during an interregnum) those making the arrangements are asked to investigate the possibility of serving clergy or NSMs or Readers or OLMs taking the duty in the first instance, and to call upon retired clergy only if such assistance cannot be provided.
- 3.2. Serving clergy and NSMs and Readers and OLMs will receive no fees for services thus undertaken; retired clergy should receive fees in accordance with the scale laid down (see 5 below). **In all cases expenses should be reimbursed** (see 1.1 to 1.6. above). During an interregnum any fee due is payable by the Diocesan Board of Finance and during the holidays of the Minister by the Parochial Church Council.
- 3.3. Where two services follow each other and a retired priest is asked to officiate, then whenever possible the same person should be asked to conduct both services in order to save expenses.

4. Retirement

- 4.1. For the purposes of this Code of Practice, a stipendiary minister may be deemed to be retired when the individual has reached the age of 65 and is not in paid employment. If a person under the age of retirement is not in paid employment; or part time employment; consideration may be given to their receiving fees. Advice should be obtained from the Archdeacon and an Agreement put in place that is **separate from any Statement of Particulars**.
- 4.2. Special arrangements may sometimes be made for a retired minister, whether Stipendiary or Non-Stipendiary, to conduct services on a regular basis in a parish in which she/he lives or habitually worships. This may be during an interregnum or when it is otherwise deemed appropriate.

In such circumstances a written agreement must be made with the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Finance Department for fees to be paid to the retired minister for occasional offices and other services at a rate determined by the Diocesan Board of Finance.

5. Scale of Fees (as from 1st January 2026 and subsequently revised in January each year).

Subject to the provisions of the forgoing sections of this code of practice, fees payable to retired clergy, in the circumstances indicated above, are as follows: -

Sunday or weekday service in parish in which they do not normally worship and subject to a maximum of two services in any one Church in a week	£66.00
Weddings	£171.00
Funerals – Church service	£88.00
Funerals – No church service	£138.00

(The remaining **one-third** of the DBF fee should be remitted to the Diocese). The relevant PCC remains entitled to their full fee.

These fees may be deducted from the Fee due to the DBF and paid to the retired clergy direct by a PCC.